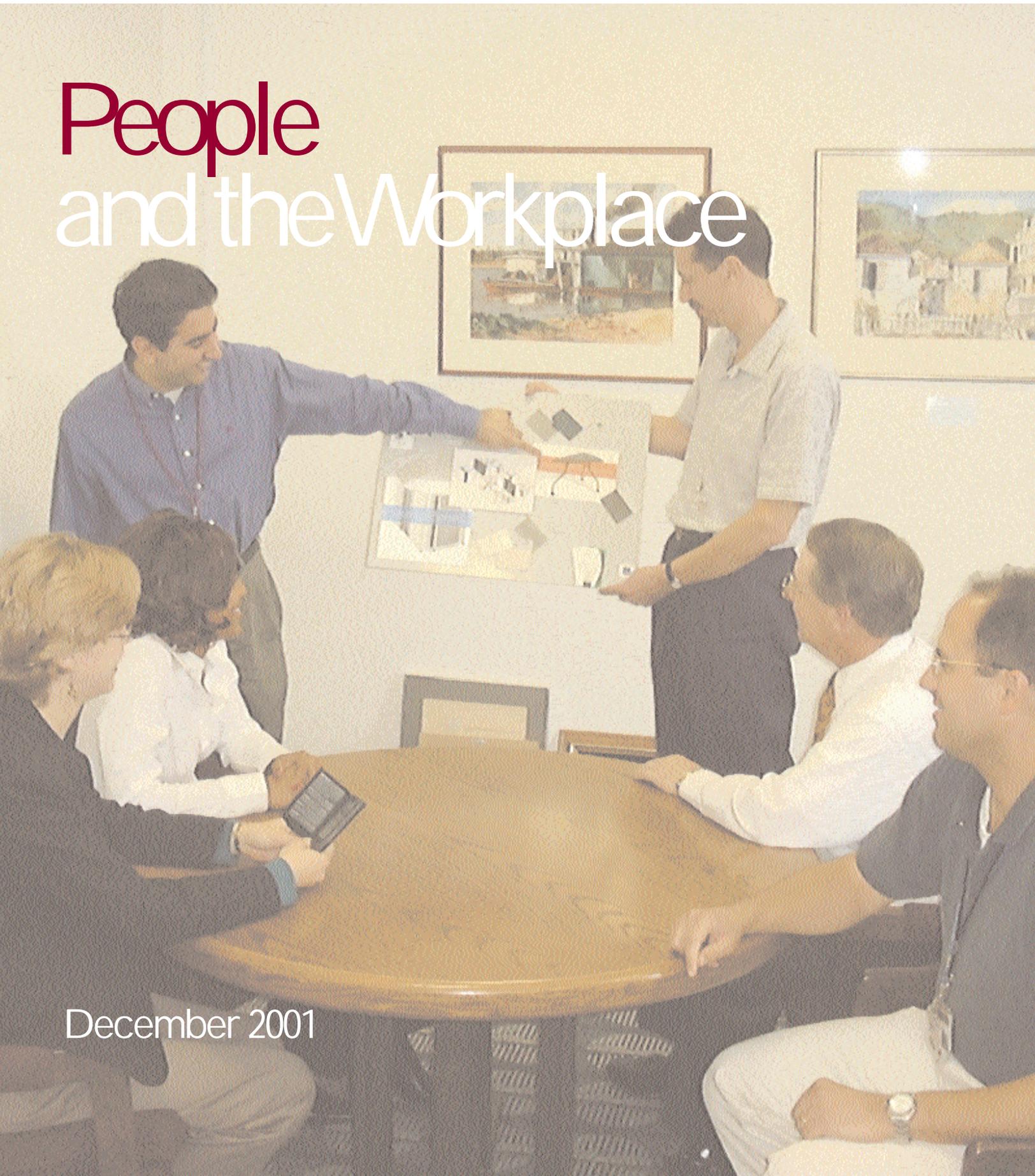


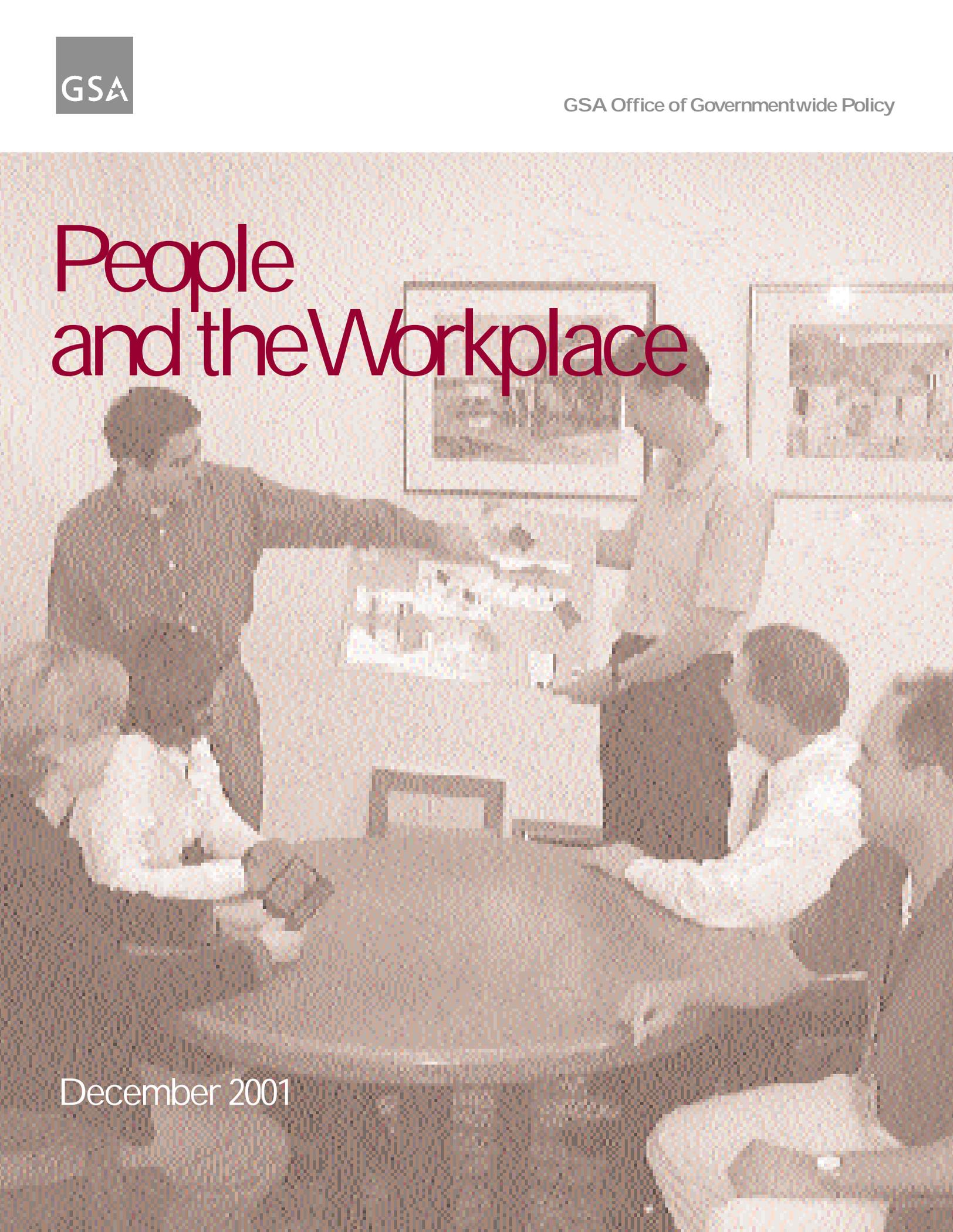
# People and the Workplace



December 2001



# People and the Workplace

A black and white photograph of a meeting. A man in a dark suit stands on the left, pointing towards a large architectural model on a table. Several other people, including a woman in a light-colored blouse and a man in a dark suit, are seated around the table, looking at the model. The room has framed pictures on the wall.

December 2001

# Foreword

**T**he Office of Governmentwide Policy is pleased to issue *People and the Workplace*.

This publication pulls together the work of some innovative thinkers in the private and academic sectors, and adds a few thoughts of our own.

The emerging concept of the workplace represents an integration of the disciplines of facilities management, information technology and human resources management. Today's workplace requires new measurement paradigms, new performance models, and new ways of thinking about what we in Government do and how we can get it accomplished most effectively and efficiently.

The readings contained in this publication indicate that, for the Federal government, one way to address the imminent human capital crisis is to provide a 21st century

work environment that attracts and retains productive and satisfied associates. We address this theme from a measurement-oriented standpoint in our companion publication, *Productivity and the Workplace*.

I would like to recognize David Bibb, whose Office of Real Property undertook this innovative initiative. With leadership from Stan Kaczmarczyk of the Innovative Workplaces Division, the project team of Joanne Shore and Ray Wynter produced this original publication. Additionally, we would like to recognize the contributors from the Federal government, the private sector, the academic community and the not-for-profit research sector. Without your dedication and participation, this publication would not have been possible.



G. Martin Wagner  
Associate Administrator  
Office of Governmentwide Policy  
U.S. General Services  
Administration

# Table of Contents

Foreword .....	ii
Acknowledgments .....	v
Introduction .....	vii
<b>The 21st-Century Workplace</b>	
<i>Viewpoint by Myra Howze Shiplett</i> .....	1
<i>The 21st-Century Workplace by Christine Barber</i> .....	2
<b>Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire</b>	
<i>Viewpoint by Dr. Wendell Joice</i> .....	15
<i>Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire</i> <i>by Gina Vega and Gregory T. Simpson</i> .....	16
<b>Telework in the Federal Government: Three Case Histories</b>	
<i>Viewpoint by Gil E. Gordon</i> .....	27
<i>The Internal Revenue Service Hoteling Pilot</i> <i>by Adriane Thormahlen</i> .....	29
<i>Telecommuting at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office</i> <i>by Debbie Cohn</i> .....	34
<i>The Office of Real Property Telework Pilot</i> <i>by William H. Michael, Jr.</i> .....	36
<b>Team-Building in a Virtual Environment</b>	
<i>Viewpoint by Deborah L. Duarte</i> .....	41
<i>Team-Building in a Virtual Environment by Joanne Shore</i> .....	42
<b>"Ready, Set, Go Home"</b>	
<i>Viewpoint by Madeline Caliendo</i> .....	47
<i>"Ready, Set, Go Home" by Carole Hawkins</i> <i>(Reprinted by Permission of Black Enterprise Magazine)</i> .....	48
<b>More Productivity-Related Initiatives</b> .....	57
<b>Appendix A: Contact Information</b> .....	61
<b>Publication Survey</b> .....	63



# Acknowledgments

The publication that follows is the result of the cooperation and effort of many individuals and organizations in the public, private and academic sectors. We deeply appreciate everyone's assistance as we explored the impact

of the workplace on every organization's most important assets – the employees who make it happen. We would like to specifically acknowledge the following individuals and organizations that helped to make our concept a reality.

- Christine Barber . . . . . Knoll, Inc.  
Gina Vega . . . . . Merrimack College  
Gregory Simpson . . . . . AT&T  
Adriane Thormahlen . . . . . Internal Revenue Service  
Debbie Cohn . . . . . U.S. Patent and Trademark Office  
William Michael . . . . . U.S. General Services Administration
- 

We would also like to thank the publishers of Black Enterprise Magazine for allowing us to include the article, "Ready, Set, Go Home."

Our appreciation is given to the Viewpoint commentators, who provided their expert insights and experienced perspectives on the collection of articles.

- Myra Howze Shiplett . . . . . National Academy of Public Administration  
Gil Gordon . . . . . Gil Gordon, Gil Gordon Associates  
Madeline Caliendo . . . . . U.S. General Services Administration  
Wendell Joice . . . . . U.S. General Services Administration  
Deborah Duarte . . . . . Consultant
- 

We hope that People and the Workplace is a valuable addition to the field and a catalyst for further research efforts in this important subject. It represents an outstanding

example of cooperation and good will among professional colleagues in academia, the private sector, and governments at the local, Federal and international levels.

Stan Kaczmarczyk  
Director,  
Innovative Workplaces Division  
GSA Office of Real Property  
Washington, DC  
December 2001



# Introduction

The concept of the workplace is the result of the merging of the disciplines of facilities management, information technology, and human resources. The Office of Real Property has advocated a process called The Integrated Workplace<sup>1</sup> to address the planning and design of innovative workplaces. We have also begun to shift our performance measurement paradigm from measuring buildings to measuring workplaces.

In *People and the Workplace*, we expand on the Integrated Workplace concept with new perspectives on alternative work environments. There are many researchers, consortia, professional organizations and academic institutions interested in the impact of the workplace on employee satisfaction and productivity. This publication includes not only our own research, but also that of noted professionals in the private, academic and public sectors. The articles address the three major components of the workplace: People (demographic trends and organizational culture), Places (environmental research) and Tools (technology creates the virtual workplace).

Some key themes that appear are:

- Demographic changes will support a greater emphasis on the People factors in the workplace.
- Telework programs can contribute substantially to workforce satisfaction and productivity.
- Teambuilding skills are more important than ever in the “virtual” work environment.
- Successful “telemanagers” will build trust, focus on results and, in essence, become better managers in the process.

A unique feature of this publication is the Viewpoint section prefacing each selection. The Viewpoints are provided by experts with considerable experience in managing workforce and workplace issues. We think you’ll enjoy their insights and perspectives, including their thoughts concerning the current Federal workplace environment.

For further information regarding workplace productivity, we recommend that you read the companion publication, *Productivity and the Workplace*, which contains a cost-benefit model for evaluating the effect of changes in the workplace on productivity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We suggest that you look at our publication, *The Integrated Workplace*, for an in-depth explanation of this approach. Please refer to Appendix A for further information.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A concerning how to obtain this publication.

# The 21st-Century Workplace

*Photo courtesy Owens Corning*

# The 21st-Century Workplace

## Viewpoint

by Myra Howze Shiplett

**Myra Howze Shiplett** is the Director of the National Academy of Public Administration's Center for Human Resources Management. Prior to joining the Academy in 1999, Ms. Shiplett spent more than 30 years as a federal executive working for both the executive and judicial branches of the federal service.

Public organizations have finally begun to recognize the value of their most important asset – their employees. Ms. Barber's article, "The 21st Century Workplace," provides excellent additional insight into the complex relationships that exist between people and organizations. The 21st century world of work is the world of "intellectual capital" and knowledge management. Employees are valued for their ideas and the contribution of those ideas to the organization's success. As the research by Daniel Yankelovich (quoted in the article) clearly demonstrates, employees who are "happy" are much more likely to be productive and to provide improved customer service, leading to a more profitable organization.

There is much additional research that supports Ms. Barber's theories. A number of private sector firms and universities have conducted research on diversity in the workplace. The research demonstrates that a more diverse workforce, when properly managed and motivated, can contribute significantly to greater productivity, customer satisfaction and profitability. This past year, the National Academy of Public Administration's Human Resources Management Center conducted similar research on the public sector and developed the same conclusions.

One of the most difficult challenges facing Federal managers today is recognizing how a diverse workforce

can benefit an organization, its employees and its customers. Traditional supervisory and managerial techniques, which frequently focus on control, hierarchy and similarity, are not well suited for realizing the unique strengths of a diverse workforce.

However, one traditional value can go a long way in bridging this gap. Treat others as you would like to be treated. Ms. Barber discusses the importance of respect for self and others, and I would add civility, in the workplace as an important value for the 21st century workforce. If public organizations truly want to realize increased programmatic success, which is their bottom line, then they must treat employees with respect and civility. Recent Gallup Poll research showed that 70 percent of employees would fire their current supervisor. That same research found that satisfied employees are 44 percent more productive.

Certainly, the world of work is changing. The federal public sector is just at the beginning of a significant change brought about by the impact of information technology, the contracting out of functions, which were historically considered federal in nature, and the looming retirement eligibility of more than half of the current workforce. When coupled with the trends Ms. Barber notes in her article – a more diverse workforce, the breakdown of boundaries, the weakening of hierarchy, simplification

of work and life, the passionate pursuit of leisure and the desire for greater personal freedom and control – it is easy to see that a revolution in the public workplace will occur during the 21st century. But with every era of great change comes great opportunity. At the Federal level, our challenge is to seize this opportunity

and use it to improve the programs and services for every citizen of this country.

We also need to remember that the most important element in meeting the challenge is recognizing employees as an asset to be valued and an investment to be carefully tended!

---

## The 21st-Century Workplace

### by Christine Barber

**Christine Barber** is the Director of Workplace Research for Knoll, Inc., an innovative designer and manufacturer of office furnishings. The Knoll headquarters is located in East Greenville, PA.

“Businesses will increasingly pursue a second bottom line that has to do with attention to the needs of employees and customers as well as shareholders, not as a return to the 1970s idea of social responsibility, but as good business - an improved second bottom line (happy employees and customers) contributes to a healthy first bottom line (profit).”

Daniel Yankelovich, Chairman, DYG Inc.

**T**his prophecy, taken from a 1998 Knoll research report entitled *The Second Bottom Line: Competing for Talent Using Innovative Workplace Design*, is coming true today in workplaces across the country. Another study, conducted by consulting firm Watson Wyatt, points to the same conclusion - devoted workers make for big dividends. The firm questioned more than 7,500 U.S. company employees about their jobs and their employers and used the answers to calculate their commitment to those employers. They then took a look at

how the companies' shareholders had done over a three-year period. The impact of worker commitment on company performance is astonishing. Companies with low commitment levels from their employees had a three-year return to shareholders of 76 percent; companies that had the highest rate of happy workers had a shareholder return of 112 percent; and companies with average worker satisfaction were right in the middle. These results illustrate the importance of Daniel Yankelovich's "second bottom line" - attention to employee needs stimulates profit.

### Attract and Retain

Many changes have occurred in the American workplace since the mid-90s. Less worker loyalty, more demanding customers, an expanding economy, and a tight labor market are all conspiring to make "attract and retain" a hot topic for fast-growing service, information, and technology companies. This is in sharp contrast to the 1990s mantra of downsizing and cost cutting, or "reengineering." Companies today are faced with a shortage of qualified workers due, in part, to a significant demographic shift known as the "baby bust." Baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, number 84 million people, while baby busters, born after 1964, number only around 41 million people. There are fewer younger workers to replace older ones, and companies are beginning to realize just how much it costs when workers leave. The Saratoga Institute, a human resources think tank, has devised a formula that estimates the cost of replacing a worker to be approximately one-and-a-half times that worker's yearly salary. Some companies say that their employee replacement costs can be as much as four times the worker's current salary. In fact, high-tech talent is so scarce that it can cost as much as \$150,000 to find one highly skilled, qualified worker.

Watson Wyatt's research underscores the importance of an employee's commitment to a company, and it appears that an important contributor to that commitment is the employee's satisfaction with his or her physical work environment. A study conducted by the Hay Group, a global human resources consulting firm, found that workers in high-performing companies - in other words, those that make more money and/or are

"employers of choice" - rate their physical working conditions higher than do their counterparts at other companies. Hay also found that people leaving their companies were not as satisfied with their physical work environment as people planning to stay. The bottom line here is that if companies want to compete in the 21st century, they will have to focus on providing satisfactory work environments.

Now that "attract and retain" has become such a critical issue for competitiveness and profitability, the profile of the emerging workforce created by Knoll's most recent research takes on an important role. Who are the workers of the future? What do they value? What are their expectations? What characteristics in a physical environment will make them more satisfied and more productive at work? These are the questions Knoll wanted answers to. The company again worked with DYG, Inc., a social and market research company headquartered in Danbury, Connecticut. The research methodology allowed Knoll and DYG to frame issues specific to the physical workplace within the context of the larger socio-cultural trends identified in DYG's SCAN program, a syndicated research effort that has tracked broad social issues since 1987.

The research base for this study was a very broad one. For SCAN, DYG conducted 1,500 telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of employees aged 18 and over. For Knoll, DYG added an extensive battery of questions aimed at workers' hopes and expectations, as well as on aspects of the physical workspace that impact worker productivity and satisfaction.

### Six Critical Trends

As we begin the 21st century, six critical trends will impact people's attitudes toward work and the nature of work. The first one is demographic and the remaining five are social in nature. The trends are:

- A more diverse workforce on many levels;
- A breakdown of boundaries;
- A weakening of hierarchy;
- Simplification;
- The passionate pursuit of leisure; and
- Personal freedom and control.

# Demographic and Social Trends

### The Demographic Trend

There are three demographic shifts taking place that will dramatically influence the workplace of the 21st century. The first shift will have profound implications for the office environment in the next ten or so years: there are going to be more and more women in the workforce, and many more in positions of power. DYG Chairman Daniel Yankelovich sees the rising influence of women as one of the major forces of change in the coming century, one that will have an impact on all aspects of American society.

Why is this happening? First of all, women are getting a bigger slice of the educational pie. In 1998, more than half of all bachelor's and master's degrees conferred in the U.S. went to women. Today, there are more women in colleges and graduate schools than men, and

women are getting a majority of the degrees. The U.S. Department of Education is projecting that over the next seven years there will be 9.2 million women and only 6.9 million men enrolled in college. Where are the men? DYG did a study in addition to SCAN for the American Association of University Women, comparing women and men and their respective choices at various transition points in their lives. For example, students were asked what they were going to do after high school. Men, given the current economy at the time of the study, did not think they needed a college education. They preferred to get a technical skill (e.g., computers) or go into a service business like landscaping. Women, on the other hand, were thinking two things. First, they needed that piece of paper to succeed; and second, they wanted the enrichment of the college experience. Apparently, young men and young women really differ over the necessity of an education. This pattern has been developing for quite some time, and educators believe it will continue.

So the shift in the educational arena is leading toward domination of many professions by women. There has already been an enormous increase in the number of women lawyers and physicians; that trend is now also making itself felt in the corporate world. In human resources, accounting, economics, financial management - and in the boardroom - the rise of women has been precipitous. In some areas, they now represent the majority.

Through SCAN, DYG developed a profile of the group spearheading this movement into positions of dominance: women who are well-

educated (four years of college or more), have a professional career, and earn well above the median for their age. We will refer to these women as "S Class women" (with a nod to Mercedes-Benz) - the "best of the best."

Just who is the S Class woman? She is much more self-assured than businesswomen of the past, and has a lot of confidence in her future and in her ability to adapt and do well under any circumstances, no matter what happens to the economy. She is sophisticated, thanks to her education, and when it comes to work, she wants to be very satisfied with her job. Interestingly, though, the S Class woman has a very strong belief that no matter how important career is, children come first, and she will make sacrifices for them. Also, she has a very strong social consciousness, particularly concerning such things as the environment, and she is salubrious, i.e., health-oriented. She is very concerned about health for two reasons - energy and longevity. Energy is a big issue, because you need a lot of it to achieve the success of an S Class woman, and it's important to live long, and live healthy, so that you can enjoy your children, your grandchildren, and "the life."

Younger women are having a tremendous effect on the workplace, and the S Class woman knows that she is going to bring about change. Clearly, she expects this to be acknowledged in the work environment. A study conducted by DYG for the Ladies Home Journal revealed that 69 percent of women say, "In the future I will only work for employers who let me have a real role in decision-making." The

percentage is even higher among college-educated women. These women are looking for respect in other ways as well. Seventy-four percent of 18- to-49-year-old women said, "Increasingly, I find that I will work only for employers who allow me a certain degree of flexibility, especially regarding work hours."

The better educated, self-confident woman wants to feel well-positioned to effect significant change in the workplace.

On the topic of respect, our research has shown that providing a comfortable, attractive, and satisfying work environment is one way that companies can show that they value their employees, and women are more emphatic than men about having a nice workspace. Our findings show that 65 percent of women versus 53 percent of men report that having a nice workspace is one of the key things that help people feel better about their jobs and enjoy them more. With satisfaction at work becoming increasingly important, employers should not overlook the issues of convenience and amenities in the workplace. Our study revealed that more than half of female office workers with children under 18 would be more satisfied at work if on-site day care were provided; half of all office workers would be more satisfied if there were a fitness center. Further, one in three office workers would be more satisfied if they had an errand service - dry cleaning, video rentals, food service. Young women - S Class women - are the driving force behind this last trend.

With so many women in the workforce, what's happening to the American family? The "Leave It to



**Figure 1:**  
**The workforce of tomorrow.**

Beaver” prototype - married couple, one income, kids - now represents only 12 percent of all households. If you factor in dual-income families, you still have only 26 percent of all households. “Married with children” is no longer the norm. In fact, one in three households revolves around someone who’s single - young, middle-aged, or older. People in the workforce now come from such diverse domestic situations that companies will have to pay much more attention to the family circumstances of each individual. This need increases with the level of education. The research shows that upscale, well-educated individuals generally expect higher levels of personalization.

A second major demographic shift is toward racial and ethnic diversity. When you look at younger entrants into the workforce - Generation Xers, who are now 23 to 34, and the up-

and-coming late teen/early 20s group, up to 22 - they are living today in a much more diverse world, ethnically, than the boomer generation. This shift will affect taste, style, and perhaps communication within the workplace.

A third shift that will affect office life in a significant way is the aging population. The older segment of Americans is growing by leaps and bounds, and it’s just not going to be possible for all in this group to leave the workforce. Think about how the workplace will change in the years to come: by 2030, the 75-plus age group is going to grow by 101 percent - it’ll more than double - while the group aged 55 to 74 is going to grow by 80 percent. More and more older people are going to be working. In fact, 80 percent of baby boomers say they plan to work during retirement - some at different jobs that they hope will be more fun, engaging, or creative than what they’re doing now, others out of necessity because they don’t have retirement funds in place. As a result, the workplace and, more specifically, the physical work environment, will have to accommodate an increasing number of older workers alongside young ones. Appealing to such disparate age groups is going to be a real challenge in the workplace of the 21st century.

### **The Five Social Trends**

The next five trends are social in nature. The first is what DYG calls the “breakdown of boundaries.” This trend, projected to continue through the 21st century, comes out of a desire to decompartmentalize and integrate all aspects of life. Compartmentalization is the baby boomer way of doing things. Boomers tend to think in the

following terms: "I love work; I have to give it 12 hours a day. I love my family and my friends; they get about six hours a day. But I need my time, so I'm going to take five hours for working out and other personal activities." As a result, the typical baby boomer day adds up to about 30 hours. On the other hand, the Generation X-er, the 23- to 34-year-old, has a firm belief in balance. If you're going to give a lot of time to your work, you don't want to do it at the expense of family and leisure time; so why not integrate work, home and leisure? While you're at work, get the dry cleaning done, have the kids nearby, and take some leisure time, then work in transit. Your life is fluid in nature, rather than compartmentalized. This fluidity, driven by a re-evaluation of just how much stress and pressure we can take and enabled now by technology, again affects how workers look at the workplace. In mid- to large-sized companies, nearly four out of 10 office workers, or 37 percent, work from their homes at least occasionally, achieving some degree of integration.

The second social trend is the weakening of hierarchy. There has been a loss of respect for authority spreading in this country over the last 30 or 40 years that translates into less faith in any institution, especially business. This trend is general throughout the population, not specific to any demographic group. In the past, it was mainly people who weren't running things who expressed anti-business sentiment, while those who worked in business, especially in management positions, were pro-business. One shocker from the latest research is that 61 percent of office workers at all levels, including

senior management, say that businesses focus too much on profits and forget about their employees and customers. Today, it's not the line worker or the non-corporate employee who's anti-business. It's business that's anti-business.

As a result, the employee base is not a loyal, committed base any longer, and there's lots of evidence to substantiate this. In our study, 50 percent of all office workers strongly agree that workers today have less loyalty to their companies than they had in the past. Today, workers believe in short-term attachments and portable skills, meaning they must keep adding to those skills. In fact, even when they know they'll be moving on, workers expect their current employer to help them build the skills they need to keep themselves marketable. Résumés are constantly updated in case they want to move fast. The social contract between employer and employee - not the written contract, but the implicit understanding that "if I show up and work hard and do a good job, then I keep the job" - is gone. Workers know that from one moment to the next they could be downsized and be on their own, so they've got to be self-reliant. Men are more likely to have this attitude than women are, because it was men who really experienced the worst of the late '80s/early '90s downsizing phenomenon.

The third social trend is simplification. The country is in a stress epidemic, and people are making trade-offs in the name of reducing stress and overload. We all experience time constraints - and, for women in particular, guilt constraints - when it comes to home and family

versus work. One of the reasons we got into this bind was the baby boomer credo that you have to “do it all.” A new belief is emerging that “you can’t do it all, and you shouldn’t try to.” Young adults, particularly women, are leading the call for simplification in everything they do. Sorting things out so you can reduce stress is the single biggest lifestyle issue of the next decade. In our study, 75 percent of office workers in mid- to large-sized companies strongly agree, “I often feel that there’s not enough time in the day to do all the things I need to do,” underscoring the importance of the work/life balance.

A comfortable, satisfying physical environment can reduce stress. So some people, particularly upscale men and women, are buying their way out of stress through personal services, and they’re willing to buy them on-site at work if they’re available. If you’re smart, whether you’ve got money or not, you’re going to find an easier way to do things. This is where online services fit in - communicating online, shopping online, and information-gathering online. What most people are doing is reducing effort in areas of life that they deem to be less important. You don’t have to do it all. You can prioritize, you can rethink choices, you can find balance.

Another manifestation of this trend is how women feel about their appearance. When SCAN was started in 1987, 68 percent of women agreed that “you should put in all the time and effort necessary to look your best at all times.” What is that number now? Forty-two percent, and falling fast! The casual-dress phenomenon at work is a telling feature of the less-stressed work

environment. Expectations concerning one’s wardrobe have changed dramatically as women prioritize downward. This may be causing trouble for the apparel industry, but it’s making life easier for women.

It also appears that not only the time and energy given to work, but work itself is sinking fast as a life priority! A study by DYG for Men’s Health magazine involved conversations with young men in college about their aspirations in life and what makes for success. Many young men believe that they’re going to “make it by the time they’re 30 and get out”; they may work after that, but at something wonderful. They’re going to make so much money by 30 that they will then be able to do anything they want. While this sounds like a pipe dream, it’s also an expression of how work is losing ground as a priority. This may be the net result of downsizing and the breaking of the social contract. Corporations are paying the price for the courses of action they took to ensure their survival.

The general disenchantment with work is leading to the fourth social trend that will have a significant influence over the next decade: the “passionate pursuit of leisure.” People will always have to work to make a lot of money, but for many, their hearts are not there. Several things are happening in the workplace as a result. Workers want more leisure, more stimulation, and an environment that’s more entertaining. We’ve all read about the “dogs at work” phenomenon - “I’ll work for less money if I can bring my dog.” Today, employers are trying new ways of pleasing people to keep them happy and motivated.

Entertaining and comfortable environments can make people feel as if they are having a leisure experience rather than a work experience.

Leisure comes in many forms, from at-home entertainment to outdoor activities to spiritual pursuits and the spa phenomenon. But at the core of it is FUN. Whimsy, fun and distraction at work, an apparent contradiction, is actually a theme that begs to be explored. Start-up companies are already incorporating the idea, and it is especially college-educated Generation X and baby boomer men who value more fun, less work. Men now look to “non-work” as a mark of status.

Finally, the fifth trend involves personal freedom and control. There are two aspects to this trend. The first is the individualization of one’s personal style, wherever and whenever possible. The upscale and



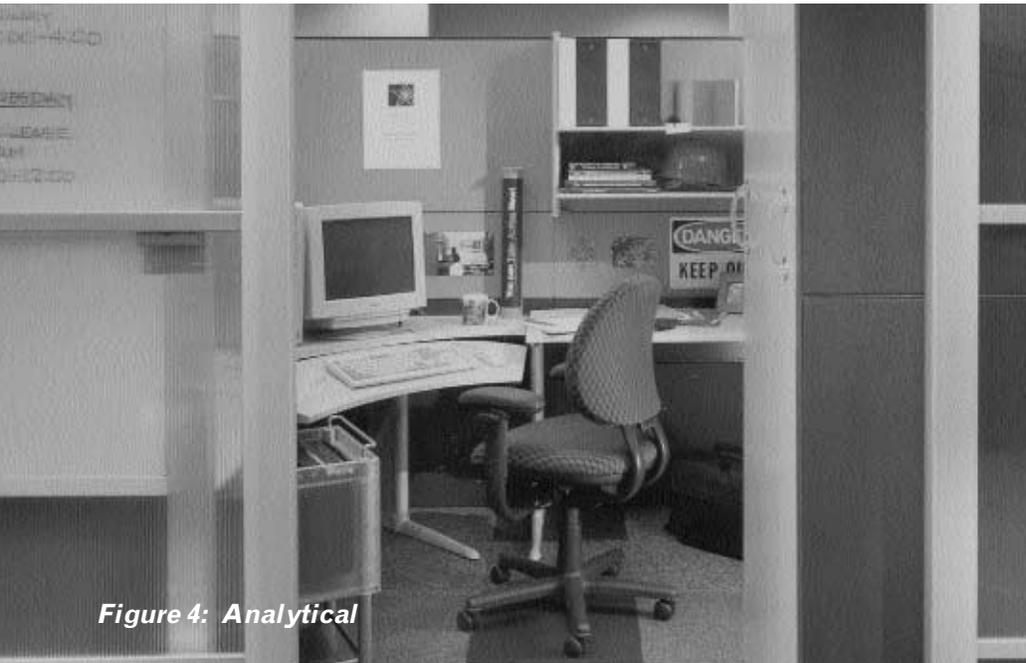
*Figure 2: A “community room”*

***Figures 2 and 3:  
Alternatives to eating at your desk.  
(Photos courtesy of U.S. General Services Administration)***



*Figure 3: Snackbar*

## The 21st-Century Workplace



*Figure 4: Analytical*

**Figures 4 and 5: Different work environments for different workstyles: analytical versus collaborative.**  
*(Photos courtesy of U.S. General Services Administration)*

educated are leading this trend, striving for self-expression as a key component of a successful life. Second, having a sense of freedom, or harmony and control, in every aspect of one's life is equally important. The ability to personalize workspace and work style is very important - and that's particularly true for the best and the brightest, the workers companies really need to attract and retain. So, interestingly, one way to satisfy people in the workplace is to give them some freedom and control over their workspace. It's about choices.

### The 21st-Century Workspace

The results of our research were derived from a nationally representative sample of office workers. The sample focuses on workers in service and manufacturing industries and breaks



*Figure 5: Collaborative*

them down in relation to how they describe their work. The majority of workers in mid- to large-sized companies, 67 percent, see themselves as problem solvers, as being in a managerial role, or as idea generators, while a smaller 28 percent see themselves as transaction workers who process forms and data. The fact that the majority of office work no longer focuses on clerical tasks has significant implications for office design. Further, in the larger organizations, a collaborative work style is clearly the most prevalent, with a small percentage of people working in isolation.

As we investigated the types of spaces people are working in today, no dominant type of office emerged. Private offices are still a significant factor, with 24 percent of our research participants occupying them. Nearly 40 percent of the workforce occupy workstations, while 36 percent are in a shared environment, whether open or enclosed.

We also put statements to people about work and workspace and asked them to categorize their responses from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” We focused on the “strongly agree” responses (numbers five and six on a six-point scale). Results point to a strong perception that more is expected of workers in the workplace today, which seems to be leading to a desire for simplification. In our study, 64 percent of office workers in mid- to large-sized firms strongly agree that “companies expect a lot more from workers today than they used to - workers are expected to get more done and get it done faster.” Awareness of this expectation leads to an

overwhelming number of office workers feeling “stressed out.” Sixty-three percent say that “having a nice workspace is one of the key things that help people feel better about their jobs and enjoy their jobs more.” This means that two out of three workers associate a better physical environment with a higher level of job satisfaction. Despite the effort made by many corporations to eliminate the perception of the office as a qualifier of status, 55 percent of office workers strongly agree that the workspace someone has is more or less related to the amount of status he or she has in a company.

### Debunking the Myths

Many myths have been generated about the office, particularly in the latter part of the 1990s. One is that workers care only about technology, and not about space or amenities. Our data refutes this. Although there is a small group that holds this opinion, it is clearly in the minority. Only 34 percent of workers in our research agreed with the statement, “As long as I have all the equipment and technology I need, I really don’t care how large my workspace is or how well furnished it is.”

The virtual office, “hoteling,” and working at home were given a tremendous amount of hype throughout the 1990s. The resulting myth that today’s office workers are so on-the-go that they care little about their workspace also failed to withstand the scrutiny of our research. Only 16 percent agree with the statement, “I spend so little time in my workspace that I am really not that concerned about its size or furnishings.” In fact, most office workers still are just that - office workers - with 73 percent reporting they are in the office most of the

time. Those who are company-employed and working exclusively at home represent only 1 percent of the working population.

### **Productivity and Satisfaction in the Workplace**

We also fielded an extensive battery of questions concerning satisfaction and productivity in the workplace. For 16 critical items (three of which revolved around amenities) we asked, "Would [each item] make you more productive or less productive, or have no impact on productivity? Would it make you more satisfied or less satisfied, or have no impact on satisfaction?" Following are the results on productivity and satisfaction.

Characteristics of the workspace that 70 percent or more of our respondents said would make them more productive are: having (1) state-of-the-art technology; (2) storage space for work-related items (where's the paperless office?); (3) the ability to control climate personally; (4) quiet space; and (5) a workspace that can be personalized to the individual's work style. Considering that one of the critical social trends mentioned earlier is a desire for more personal freedom and control, it should come as no surprise that workers would value choice and personalization in their space.

The next tier of items, endorsed by 50 to 60 percent of the workforce, includes (6) ergonomic seating; (7) a visually appealing workspace; (8) lighting control; (9) privacy; and (10) an exterior window. So these are important at the moderate level. An interesting point about ergonomics:

Ergonomic seating is highly valued by workers involved in analytics, who represent the majority of the workforce.

Bigger is not necessarily better! Concerns about size - having a large workspace, enough personal space for small meetings, and enough space for personal items - had the least impact on productivity, with 40 percent or fewer saying these are important. Results pertaining to job satisfaction were similar: It's not about bigger; it's about good design, personalization, and having the proper work environment to support the work that is being done.

### **The Privacy Paradox**

Most workers see privacy in the workplace as a critical issue. Curiously, however, the "grass is greener" phenomenon is reversed here: Those working in open desk areas or workstations are less likely to say privacy is crucial than those working in private offices. The proportion of all office workers who say privacy is crucial is 58 percent. However, of those with their own office, it's three out of four, or 74 percent. Workers given the least amount of privacy in the workplace, those working in open areas, value privacy the least.

This result gives rise to two hypotheses. The first is that there is a process of self-selection - workers who really need privacy manage to get themselves into an office or gravitate to companies that will provide them with one. The second hypothesis favors successful adaptation - workers in open spaces have learned to be productive with less privacy. It is important to note, however, that workers who have

offices value the privacy enormously.

### **Workstyle Determines Priorities**

Three different categories of worker have significantly different priorities regarding the workspace. Analytic workers are more likely to say an ergonomically designed chair would improve their productivity. Supervisory workers value the private office. Creative workers (only 8 percent of the working population describe themselves as creative) place more importance on exterior windows. It is interesting to note that workers who describe themselves as “transactional” do not express a general preference for any particular workplace characteristic.

### **Comparing Satisfaction and Productivity**

Workspace characteristics in our study that “would improve satisfaction on the job” that got a rating of 70 percent or more mirrored, almost without exception, those that would improve productivity. A workspace that can be personalized to an individual’s workstyle - quiet space, climate control, work storage space, and technology - not only contributes to productivity but has a significant impact on job satisfaction. Privacy, the quality of the chair, and the suitability of the lighting all had similar ratings in both categories, with 50 to 59 percent reporting that these would make them more satisfied. Once again, on the satisfaction scale, bigger is not necessarily better! A larger workspace, personal space for small meetings, and space for personal

items placed in the bottom tier of criteria.

For most of the workspace characteristics studied, there’s a high correlation between what workers say will make them more productive and what they say will make them more satisfied. However, three characteristics stand out as more important with respect to satisfaction: exterior windows, storage for personal items and a visually appealing workspace. Employers would do well to keep these in mind when considering job satisfaction as a strategy to attract and retain a productive workforce.

### **Conclusions**

Let us return briefly to two critical social trends that underscore the importance of the physical environment and other, intangible factors that enhance the workplace. One is the rising demand for respect on the job; the other is the rising importance of the quality of life at work. During the work week, employees spend most of their waking hours in the workplace. If the workplace is not comfortable, is not designed to support the work being done, and does not contribute to worker satisfaction, workers feel negatively about it. The physical environment is a flash point to employees. Space, equipment, furniture, and amenities - in other words, the quality of life at work - are all indicators of how valued and respected they are by the companies that employ them, and it would appear that, for companies these days, respect for employees has never been more important.

# Please Hold, I Think My House Is On Fire



# Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire

## Viewpoint

by Wendell Joice

**Dr. Wendell Joice** leads GSA's Governmentwide Telework Team. He has devoted the past 10 years of his career toward making teleworking an accepted workplace practice within the Federal Government.

The article that follows provides some good and instructive AT&T management scenarios and lessons learned, which apply easily to the Federal workforce. I would qualify the authors' description of on-site manager vs. telemanager. I am still of the opinion that (using the words of the article) "...a good manager is a good manager," and a good manager is one who manages capably according to the organizational circumstances. In today's environment, on-site managers also require the skills needed by telemanagers as well. Bear in mind that a growing number of today's on-site managers already have remote workers (mobile workers who are not teleworkers)

reporting to them. In addition, consider that interest in a "flat organizational structure," which peaked during the 1980's, has been recently re-ignited in the Federal government. Agencies are being ordered to begin moving to flatter structures. I believe that a flat organization establishes circumstances and requirements similar to those of telework arrangements, and requires similar management skills.

When comparing the managers of the information-age versus those of the industrial-age, I think the article provides a clear and instructive contrast. In fact, I think that telework and telemanagement serve to highlight this contrast.

---

*" Instead of focusing on control, on finite projects, on monitoring behavior, and on the technical expertise of help desks and others as did the traditional manager, the telemanager's focus is on building trusting relationships, personal and professional creativity, developing comfort with ambiguity, being a clear communicator via several media, establishing a high level of technical competence in oneself, and maintaining as a primary goal the reciprocated interest that results from the growth and development of Direct Reports and their participation in big picture corporate goals."*

---

I find it interesting that AT&T attributes its increases in telework to more frequent use of unscheduled (flexible) telework arrangements versus scheduled (fixed). For Federal telework, this has been a controversial issue in terms of equipment provided, in terms of being limited to flexible but minimal use of telework. If the AT&T program provides flexibility in fitting

equipment to projected average telework use, then this could be a good lesson for the Federal program. I also liked the point, which speaks for itself, "Sometimes it is about technology." This may become an issue of growing importance in the Federal government. In fact, GSA is conducting a major study on technology barriers to home-based telework.

## Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire

For similar reasons, I also found the discussion of management by objectives (MBO) interesting. Despite the organized approach to MBO cited, I think the process of MBO or, preferably, managing by results (MBR), especially for white collar non-production-oriented positions, is still an understated challenge which may lean too heavily on factors such as trust, comfort level, and favoritism. We plan to look more closely at the elements that comprise effective MBR.

While the article does not focus, directly, on workplace productivity, I would like to conclude my commentary with some thoughts on productivity and quality. Currently, there appears to be a renewed interest in productivity assessment, especially for white-collar occupations. This ongoing and vain

search for a practical and widely useful means of assessing productivity has yielded very little other than indirect, assumption-laden, and/or labor-intensive techniques with questionable validity. The focus on productivity combined with the close relationship between technology and increased production to create an imbalance between attention to the quantity of work at the expense of quality of work. Difficult-to-measure factors such as quality and creativity are completely overshadowed. We need a completely new approach to productivity assessment research (such as breaking down work into discrete behaviors that can be related to performance measures in controlled laboratory settings) as well as an increased emphasis on the importance of quality as well as quantity in workplace output.

---

# Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire

by Gina Vega & Gregory T. Simpson

**Dr. Gina Vega** is an Assistant Professor of Management at the Francis E. Girard School of Business and International Commerce, Merrimack College, North Andover, MA. She is the author of the recent book "A Passion for Planning: Financials, Operations, Marketing, Management and Ethics."

**Greg Simpson** is District Manager of International Marketing within the Data and Internet Services organization of AT&T, a major telecommunications corporation. More biographical information is included in the paper that follows.

## Abstract

The importance of selecting appropriate candidates for teleworking has been well documented, and

continues to stand as a challenge to the success of telework programs. However, a different selection process has often been overlooked in the goal of expanding telework

programs. That selection process has to do with picking the right person to manage teleworkers, field workers, and remote workers of all kinds. What are the characteristics of a “good” telemanager? How will the telemanager differ from the on-site manager? AT&T, a leader in American telework, provides us with some suggestions via the experiences of a telemanaging District Manager.

## Introduction

In the not-so-distant past, the typical Bell System District Manager could drive (or even walk) the full physical area for which he was responsible in a few hours. As third line managers whose focus was upward, towards the higher reaches of the organization, District Managers experienced little or no contact with the workers who reported to their Direct Reports (supervisors or foremen), and they liked it that way. Those days are gone.

## Background

AT&T has been a leader in advancing telework opportunities since the early 1990s, and the number of AT&T teleworkers continues to climb. Their 2000 telework survey shows that more than half (56 percent) of their managers telework at least one day per month, and 27 percent of all company teleworkers do so at least one day per week. Eleven percent of AT&T managers telework full time, conducting their business in virtual offices at their homes or elsewhere. The increase has been accompanied by a significant decrease (40 percent to 25 percent over two years) in formal, scheduled telework arrangements. Most of the increase is being

attributed to corporate flexibility in terms of the creation of episodic, unscheduled telework options and informal arrangements that encourage the creative use of one’s time, space, and personal preferences.

Greg Simpson, District Manager of International Marketing within AT&T’s Data and Internet Services organization, provides a working example of the “typical” telemanager. Simpson’s background includes marketing, account management, sales, and operations. He has been working for AT&T since 1992 in several capacities. Greg joined AT&T as an Account Executive in the Manhattan Commercial Markets sales branch. He was hired initially as a virtual office employee and worked from an apartment on Manhattan’s Upper East Side for over a year. Greg then joined AT&T’s Global Services organization where he supported a large financial services client for a few years before being promoted into AT&T’s International Network Services organization where he served as an Offer Manager, and later a Marketing Manager. Greg was recruited to serve as the Executive Assistant to a Sales Vice President in Manhattan who had branches reporting to her from Illinois, Texas, and Virginia and was later promoted to District Manager in a customer care organization. Subsequently, he joined AT&T’s outsourcing subsidiary, AT&T Solutions, and recently accepted an international marketing position in AT&T’s Data and Internet Services group. Greg has maintained a functional home office throughout his tenure at AT&T and tries to work from home a few days each month.

## Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire



**Figure 6: A telemanager takes advantage of technology to work remotely.**

In 1998, Simpson accepted a promotion to District Manager in AT&T's Service Provider Markets Customer Care organization. His work included leading the ordering, provisioning, and maintenance centers, project management teams, a process

engineering team, and a group of program managers. His team was located across the United States and, as a telemanager, Simpson had Direct Reports who were also

telemanagers managing teleworkers. In this position, he had eight Direct Reports, each of whom also had up to a dozen people reporting to him or her.

### **Fairy Tales Can Come True: Building a Good Telemanager**

A misleading myth that has spread throughout the telework community is that, in a riff on Gertrude Stein's famous words, "a good manager is a good manager is a good manager." This couldn't be further from the truth in the case of telemanagement. Traditionally, a good manager plays multiple roles (interpersonal, informational, decisional)<sup>3</sup> and fulfills several functions (planning, organizing, leading, controlling). To perform these functions and play these roles, the manager needs to develop certain conceptual, human relations, and technical skills.

---

According to management theorist Henry Mintzberg, a manager's roles can be deconstructed roughly as follows:

#### **Interpersonal**

- Figurehead: represents the organizational unit in all matters of formality
- Liaison: interacts with peers and others outside the organizational unit
- Leader: provides guidance and motivation to the work group and defines the atmosphere of the workplace

#### **Informational**

- Monitor: receives and collects information
- Disseminator: transmits information within the organization
- Spokesperson: disseminates organizational information outside the organization

#### **Decisional**

- Entrepreneur: initiates change
- Disturbance handler: mediates conflict, fills in for sudden departure of subordinates, handles special needs for customers
- Resource allocator: decides where the organization will expend its resources
- Negotiator: handles major non-routine negotiations within and outside of the organization.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Henry Mintzberg. (1972). *The Nature of Managerial Work*. New York: Harper & Row, pp. 54-99

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

These traditional roles are familiar to us, and some of them are, indeed, played by the telemanager. However, telemanagers handle these roles differently from traditional managers, using a different combination of the key conceptual, human relations, and technical skills. The job of telemanager requires an emphasis on a combination of five of the preceding roles: liaison, monitor/disseminator, and disturbance handler/negotiator. These roles are supported by highly developed technical and human relations skills.

### **Liaison: Making The Team Feel Like A Team**

Simpson's first goal in his new position was to meet the team and shape this group of managers into a cohesive unit. Traditionally, this means calling a meeting in the conference room, introducing yourself, listening to the introductions of others, and sharing your managerial philosophy. But lack of collocation can make such meetings difficult to design, with one manager working in a cellar in Colorado, another in an attic in Florida, and a third in a room off her living room in California. Imagine having to meet and try to impress your new boss over the phone or to try to coordinate the new voices with the new names, differentiating between Sue and Suzanne, Jim and James, Bob and Robert.

The resulting teleconference bridge that was set up for the introductory meeting was only the beginning of a series of technological solutions that helped to cross time and space barriers. In order to ensure that everyone felt like they were part of the team, Simpson held weekly

conference calls with his Direct Reports and required them to have weekly meetings with their own Direct Reports. He also set up a conference bridge for some celebrations such as birthdays that allowed remote employees to dial in and participate even though they could not attend in person and enjoy the cake.

Simpson hosted monthly conference calls/meetings with his entire district and brought them together twice each year for a face-to-face meeting that included training sessions. One of the challenges of the face-to-face meetings was to be able to have everyone travel to New Jersey for multiple days and still ensure that their work was being done and that client contact was not disrupted. This was more challenging than simply bringing everyone together in the conference room or auditorium. The solution was to extend the semi-annual meeting by a day and provide the team members time in the mornings and afternoons to do their work. Team meetings were held from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and again at 6:30 pm for dinner, leaving plenty of time for client contact in the morning and the afternoon.

### **Sometimes, It Is About the Technology**

All employees were instructed to contact their local phone company for a voice mail service that callers could be sent to if the employee was either on the phone or away from the desk. As a result, each team member had separate and isolated voice mail boxes. A collocated team ordinarily shares a voice mail system and thus, has the ability to send broadcast voice mail messages to a distinct list of people or forward

## Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire

voice messages to one or more people. To operate as a team, Simpson believed that his distributed team needed these capabilities as well. He worked with AT&T's technical support and arranged for all of his remote team members to have a voice mailbox on a single system in the building where he worked. He then instructed each of his remote employees to arrange for their calls to be sent to these remote mailboxes when they were on the phone or away from their desks.

This unique technical action gave his team the ability to send broadcast voice mail messages, but more importantly, it enabled them to forward actual messages left by customers, ensuring that information was received accurately. In addition, Simpson established e-mail distribution lists so that he could target a specific manager and her team, his Direct Reports, or his entire district. The same lists were also used for voicemail broadcasts. A high comfort level with technology enhances the telemanager's ability to establish good lines of communication with remote workers, and the telemanager's technical skills can shortcut the delays inherent in waiting on the line for technical support.

### **Monitor/Disseminator: A Kick Under The Table**

One of the advantages of having your team all sitting outside of your traditional office is that you can grab someone from their desk if you need them. When a customer calls to find out something specific about an order, you can simply bring the person on your team who is responsible for the order into your office to speak to the client. This is

not as easy when your team is spread across the country. His ability to leverage technology helped Simpson to overcome this hurdle.

People managing a project remotely spend a lot of time on conference calls, both internally and with the customer. What can be done when a manager calls someone whom they know is working from home and the person does not answer the phone? One method that Simpson used to reach remote employees while they were on conference calls was to send an e-mail. Tied up on the conference call but sitting in front of their computers, Simpson and his team could communicate via e-mail while being present on their conference call. This process is the modern day version of a kick under the table, whereby people could be told to stop speaking about a particular subject via e-mail without anyone else on the call being aware of the communication.

### **Making Assumptions And Orders of Magnitude**

When a manager does not see the conditions of a worker's workplace, it becomes difficult to protect that worker from egregious errors. An employee who normally worked in the same office as Simpson needed to work from home in order to wait for a repairman. Not being experienced in telework and unfamiliar with wireless phone charges, he decided to dial in to the network on his home line with his laptop. This was fine because there was a toll-free number. He also decided that he could use his corporate calling card to make business calls and that would be free too, because he first dialed in to a toll-free number.

This would ordinarily have been an acceptable scenario. However, the worker did not have two phone lines in his house, so he used his personal wireless phone for the calling card calls. He was unaware of the fact that calls to toll-free numbers are not toll-free when dialed on a wireless phone. After spending the whole day talking on his personal wireless phone with his corporate calling card and using his home phone line for his laptop, he was quite proud of himself. He was less so when he received his wireless phone bill for that day and realized that he had racked up \$350 in charges to the “toll-free” number for his corporate calling card. Clearly, some additional instructions from his manager, some sharing of information, would have helped.

### **Disturbance Handler/ Negotiator: Why Is My Boss Mad At Me?**

As a manager of remote workers, it is important to be aware that socializing is an integral part of the manager-employee relationship. If you work in a traditional environment and see people who work in the same building, you say hello to them in the hallways, the cafeteria, the elevator, etc. Often the only contact that a teleworker may have with her manager is a short e-mail message that she sends or a brief voice mail message.

When Simpson first started managing the team, he used to send off brief e-mail messages to ensure that specific items were being taken care of. He started to hear that some of his employees thought that he was mad at them and they were confused because he did not seem displeased when they spoke with him – he was actually quite sociable, from his own

perspective. But his “non-chatty” style was misinterpreted by teleworkers who were highly sensitized to the personal touch of collocated relationships and didn’t relate easily to the electronic style of communication.

As a result, Simpson changed his style when sending messages to remote employees. He starts an e-mail with a personal reference (“How is your son doing?” for example) before getting down to business to help keep teleworkers’ morale at the same level as those in an office who socialize with others throughout the day.

### **Close To The Customers**

One of the benefits of having a geographically dispersed team is the ability to serve clients with local support. The challenge occurs when there are a disproportionately large number of clients in one region but the team is evenly distributed. Client concerns about receiving support from a geographically distant part of the country in a different time zone were successfully overcome by showing them that the teleworkers did, in fact, complete several hours of work after the clients’ business day ended or before it began. Simpson also used a system where someone in the same time zone as the client served as an emergency backup person in case a problem arose when his or her designated support person was not working.

### **It’s The Skills That Make A Telemanager Successful**

Clearly, the telemanager needs to develop a specific set of skills to support the roles just described.

## Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire

Instead of focusing on control, on finite projects, on monitoring behavior, and on the technical expertise of help desks and others as did the traditional manager, the telemanager's focus is on building trusting relationships, personal and professional creativity, developing comfort with ambiguity, being a clear communicator via several media, establishing a high level of technical competence in oneself, and maintaining as a primary goal the reciprocated interest that results from the growth and development of Direct Reports and their participation in big picture corporate goals.

### How Can I Tell If They're Working?

One of the concerns that frequently arises among telemanagers is how can anyone be sure that the people that work from their homes are in fact working and not napping, watching TV, or sunning themselves. The answer to this suggests a revival of Management by Objectives<sup>5</sup>, where mutually agreed upon goals are set and performance against those goals is measured. MBO, although difficult to implement unless there is full support from the top of the organization and total commitment to annual review of organizational goals, has proven to be highly effective as a short-term measurement and evaluative process.

MBO is based on four behavioral principles (feedback, participation, reward, and reciprocated interest) that indicate a direct correlation between motivation to perform and performance levels. This suggests a developmental approach to appraisal, providing opportunities for feedback from the manager prior to

the final appraisal for the year, the participation of the worker in establishing the performance goals for the period, a desirable reward at the successful conclusion of a year's objectives, and the design of personal, career-based objectives that mesh well with the corporate goals as determined at the head of the organization. Trust also plays a large role in this arena as well as knowing how much work you are asking someone to do and how much is actually getting done.

It is important to note that, even with appropriate telemanagement, working in a virtual office environment is not for everyone. Simpson has experienced workers who are not productive when working from home because they become easily distracted and do things like eating two lunches. He also knows people who roll out of bed, turn the computer on, decide to respond to "just one e-mail" and, before they know it, it is afternoon and they have not showered, eaten, or stopped working since they started at 6:00 a.m. It often happens to diligent workers that the work pulls them in, engages them, and they work harder and harder, driving themselves relentlessly without any pressure whatever from the manager. It is important to be sure that the work/home line does not become blurred and work can be stopped at the end of the day at a reasonable hour. This is the responsibility of the telemanager.

### I Recognize The Voice But Can't Place The Face – Promotion From Afar

It is not uncommon for people to move up the ladder within a large office of a traditional organization

<sup>5</sup> Peter Drucker. (1954). *The Practice of Management*. New York. Harper & Row.

because they have worked closely with other people and have been exposed to managers other than their own. This is not always the case for a teleworker. They may be overlooked when it comes time for promotions or other opportunities, especially if they are located in an area where the company does not have any offices. Not all positions lend themselves to working from home, and not all managers see the benefits in working from a virtual office. One of the people in Simpson's district who worked for one of his managers called Simpson one day and asked him, "What are you going to do to get me promoted?"

This was an intrepid move for someone that Simpson had never spoken to before nor had had any career discussions with. The traditional District Manager, or "District Manager Past," would have been shocked by the boldness of this action, as it violated the sanctity of the chain of command and the scalar relationships that were so beloved in traditional organizations. But telemanagers need to learn how to relate to people both several levels up and down within the organization on a less formal basis. Once he was able to determine the worker's qualifications and her career goals, Simpson was able to help her. The worker, located in Oklahoma City where AT&T does not have a large presence, was frustrated by her apparent lack of career opportunities. After speaking to one of his peers who managed a product management district in New Jersey, Simpson learned that his colleague was having difficulty filling positions that had opened as a result of other workers' having taken advantage of the voluntary retirement program.

This situation was creating a shortage of qualified people at headquarters.

Simpson's colleague, like many others in New Jersey, was not intending to fill any of his open positions with remote employees. However, after talking about the benefits of hiring someone who had experience implementing his product for a product management position, he saw the benefit of promoting the Oklahoman. This teleworker could offer good value to the company even if she was in Oklahoma City while the rest of his team was in New Jersey. This manager now has a few members of his team that work remotely.

### Dealing With Emergencies

The traditional manager need know nothing at all about the personal lives of her Direct Reports, but the telemanager often knows more than she wants to. The development of a high comfort level with knowing "too much" about events that are occurring outside the office is a valuable skill for the telemanager. One evening, Simpson was on the phone with one of his virtual office employees when she mentioned that she smelled smoke. The worker was not terribly concerned, because her high school-aged daughter was upstairs in the kitchen.

As Simpson and she chatted about business, the worker indicated that the smoke smell seemed to be getting a little worse. She shouted up to her daughter from her basement office to see what was going on. Simpson heard her yell even though the phone was covered. She then came back to the phone in a panic, asking him to hold because

## Please Hold, I Think My House Is on Fire

her daughter was not answering and she thought that her house was on fire. She set the phone down and Simpson heard her continue to call for her daughter as she ran up the stairs. All he could think of was whether he should call 911. Before long, the worker was back on the phone with the full story: her daughter had started to make macaroni and cheese and then went into her room to listen to music. She forgot about the pot on the stove and could not hear her mother yelling over the CD player. Luckily, the fire was not serious but it could have been worse if the mother were in a traditional office, miles away from home instead of in the basement. Simpson himself had to be prepared to respond to this potential emergency from another state.

### Counter-Intuitive Problem Solving

As in most large companies, at AT&T supplies are purchased centrally in order to ensure volume discounts and cost-effective purchase of commonly used office products. The central purchasing department purchases pallets of printer/copier paper at a substantial discount. When dealing with a distributed workforce, however, such traditionally successful strategies work less well – the problem Simpson and his district faced was that it cost more to ship a ream of paper to a remote employee than the ream of paper cost. By the simple expedient of bypassing the “standard procedure,” Simpson installed a new process by which teleworkers and remote employees could gain approval to purchase supplies on their own from approved vendors and avoid the added shipping expenses.

People who work in small organizations or in non-traditional, organic business structures may smile at the simplicity of this solution, but for those who work in large, extended, formal, traditional businesses, solutions like these are not easy to implement. They require that the telemanager not be bound by what has been acceptable in the past, but find a way to creatively adapt appropriate existing processes to handle the needs of a changing work environment while working within the confines demanded by the size of the organization.

At the end of the day, bypassing traditional methods, rules and procedures may be the appropriate behavior of telemanagers committed to improving the effectiveness of their Direct Reports and the efficiency of their organizations. MBO can help to establish personal guidelines for action for both the telemanager and his staff because, according to the original intent of Drucker’s philosophy of management by objective, all objectives are managerial by nature.<sup>6</sup>

### The Future Of Telework At AT&T

A “best guess” prediction about the future of telework at AT&T comes from Joe Roitz, AT&T’s District Manager of Telework and producer of its web site [www.att.com/telework](http://www.att.com/telework). Roitz believes that the number of AT&T employees who telework will continue to increase, based on positive feedback from current teleworkers.

Congestion resulting from the Olympics in Atlanta forced many AT&T employees to work from home. When the Olympics ended, many of

<sup>6</sup> Peter Drucker. (1954). *The Practice of Management*. New York. Harper & Row, p. 13.

these employees chose, as a child initially reluctant to take a bath often chooses, not to get out of the tub and return to their traditional offices, but rather to continue in the alternate work arrangement. Roitz has observed that the first teleworkers in an organization could lead a lonely existence, but as more employees in that organization start teleworking, the benefits reported tend to increase. According to Roitz, "The higher the participation, the higher the benefits reported."

As technology advances, it will become easier for people to telework. Cable modems and DSL connections (Digital Subscriber Lines) will increase the amount and speed at which information can be received by and sent from teleworkers' homes. Some teleworkers who have cable access at home indicate that they can actually send and receive information faster with this cable modem at home than in the office. In addition, the number of teleworkers may increase as younger, more technically savvy managers work their way up and start leading organizations that have not been open to telework in the past.

It seems clear that improving technology, a high comfort level with technological solutions, and identifiable career paths, coupled with senior-level commitment to emergent work structures at alternate locations, spells a positive future for telework at AT&T.



***Figure 7: One of the benefits of teleworking: less time on the road.***

# Telework in the Federal Government: Three Case Histories



*Photo courtesy Owens Corning*

# Telework in the Federal Government: Three Case Histories

## Viewpoint

by Gil E. Gordon

**Gil Gordon** heads *Gil Gordon Associates*, a management consulting firm specializing in the implementation of telecommuting/telework, in Monmouth Junction, NJ. Since 1982 he has been working with private- and public-sector clients on the appropriate and selective use of telecommuting and virtual office strategies. His web site, [www.gilgordon.com](http://www.gilgordon.com), is recognized as a global telework resource.

## My Tax Dollars Are At Work!

The phrase “your tax dollars at work” is usually spoken with **derision**, to describe a seemingly frivolous or wasteful use of the hard-earned money we taxpayers out here beyond the Beltway send to Washington. When it comes to telework, however, I’m glad to report that I replace the derision with respect, because these three case studies conclusively show that my money is being well spent.

There’s a very loud noise when the jaws of a roomful of corporate types in the private sector all drop in unison after I tell them that one of the leading examples of smart use of telework today is the Federal government. I suspect this would be a particularly joyous sound to the ears of all the people involved in these three - and many other similar - programs. After all, we don’t expect much from the mother of all bureaucracies - many in the private sector probably suspect that quill and ink are still standard-issue supplies in many government offices.

The truth, however, is quite different. Even though the Federal government overall might not always be the leader in adopting new work methods and technologies, there is an amazing amount of fresh, creative,

and business-like activity happening inside the Beltway and in the rest of the far-flung Federal service. These three case studies bear this out.

Here are some of the more noteworthy reasons why it warms this taxpayer’s heart to read these cases:

- **Close Your Eyes And You’re In Corporate America:** It’s quite amazing to see how easily these case studies could actually have been written about a private-sector program; substitute a few words here and there, and you’re describing a typical telework initiative in a Fortune 500 company. To be sure, there still are some notable differences (e.g., the mention of the role of an employee union) but in general, the text and tone of these case studies is more business-like than, well, government-like. This says to me that people in government are starting to think more like people in business - with a focus on cost control, increasing employee effectiveness, and so on.
- **“Telework Is Impossible To Evaluate” - Hogwash!:** For almost twenty years now, I’ve heard people complain about how hard it is to evaluate a telework program, and about all the reasons why any attempts to do so will be full of more holes than a block of Swiss cheese. This is nonsense:

## Telework in the Federal Government: Three Case Histories

telework is hard to evaluate only if you're looking for a magic-bullet metric that is excruciatingly more precise than any measures you're used to using in the office. If, instead, you're willing to create what I call a "market basket" of measures - including a mix of quantity, quality, timeliness, multi-tasking capability, employee satisfaction, and customer satisfaction - you absolutely can do an evaluation. These three cases collectively show that with a little bit of persistence, a little bit of assumption-making, and a lot of resourceful thinking, you can come up with a measurement approach that is at least as valid and defensible as anything used to measure performance in the office.

- **Telework Is A Secret Weapon:** One of the themes that runs through these cases is the way in which the introduction of telework is a deliciously sneaky (though not intentionally so) back-door way of fine-tuning managerial skills and getting teleworkers and their managers to put some long-overdue emphasis on planning and organization. When everyone has the luxury of frequent, close contact in the office five days a week, it's easy to get lazy and sloppy about those Management 101 basics of time management, work planning, and priority ranking of tasks. But when some of the office workers are working away from the office, more discipline is needed - and that discipline spills over into the ways in which the managers involved manage their in-office staff as well.
- **Captain Kirk Was Right - Space Is The Final Frontier:**

Last, I find it interesting that the use of hoteling and other alternative office design strategies runs so clearly through these case studies, and through other Federal telework programs I'm aware of. If you go back and read the earliest literature and telework, flexiplace, telecommuting, or whatever you choose to call it, you'll see that the fundamental concept is decentralizing the office - not simply sending everyone home to work. The work-at-home variety of telework always was, still is, and (in my view) always will be the predominant form of telework in the US, but other alternatives both within and outside the core office will play an important role. A telework program that offers only the polarized choices of being in the standard office or being at home is a very limited one; the best programs today and in the future will include a wider range of officing alternatives.

Is everything perfect about these case studies and about Federal telework in general? Of course not. For example, I find it frustrating (though nowhere near as frustrating as the participants do) to read about the prevalence of technology roadblocks that in the private sector are much more commonly ancient history. I suspect this is because the IT infrastructure in the Federal service is the biggest of the big battleships to turn around, and that the combination of policy constraints and budgeting delays prevent the use of better solutions. Also, there is a toe-in-the-water kind of tentativeness (e.g., the initial one day per week limits) that is being seen less often in the private sector; this is a vexing problem because the

more limited a program is in scope and duration, the harder it is to draw any meaningful conclusions about telework effectiveness. This problem is going away, it seems, mostly because success breeds success and wider implementation.

I know that these three cases as written mask any number of culture battles, power tugs-of-war, and policy development nightmares that happened en route to the successes described. The authors weren't trying to gloss over them, but (wisely) felt instead that it's more effective to emphasize the positive outcomes than the struggles along the way. As hard as it is to create

change and drive innovation into any organization, it is doubly challenging when that organization is the Federal service. The good news is that these cases represent examples of change that benefit employees, management, and the public at large; the bad news is that for every case like these, there may be five or ten other examples where telework is mired in meetings and memos in the bowels of other agencies. To those I offer encouragement and empathy - and a reminder that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the Internal Revenue Service, and the General Services Administration all survived those obstacles and you can too. Hang in there.

---

## The Internal Revenue Service Hoteling Pilot

by Adriane Thormahlen

**Adriane Thormahlen** has over 20 years of experience with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in strategic systems planning, reengineering, business process improvement, organizational change, and total quality management.

In today's highly competitive labor market, flexiplace has emerged as an effective business tool to attract and retain a skilled workforce. Flexiplace, also known as "telecommuting" and "telework" (terms used interchangeably throughout this article), refers to working outside of the traditional office one or more days per week. High-tech professionals in particular are increasingly enticed by telecommuting as a way to balance busy work and personal lives. A Washington Post survey of 3,500 Information Technology (IT) workers in the Baltimore and D.C. areas

revealed that the most preferred employment benefit was telecommuting. Recognizing the many benefits this work arrangement offers to organizations, employees and the community, Congress passed legislation in October, 2000 requiring executive agencies to permit all eligible Federal employees to telecommute, to be phased in over a four-year period.

The Winter 2000 edition of IRS' Leader's Digest described the growing number of employees servicewide who successfully work apart from their manager and work

group. Flexiplace is a work option, however, that is underutilized in Information Systems (renamed Information Technology Services but referred to as IS for this report only) despite the fact that many IS work activities are conducive to telecommuting. To demonstrate the benefits of flexible work arrangements for both the organization and its employees, IS' Office of Information Resources Management (OIRM) conducted a Flexiplace/Hoteling Pilot from June to October, 2000. Hoteling is an alternative work option often combined with flexiplace since telecommuters spend a significant percentage of time away from the conventional office. For the pilot, telecommuters worked at home and reserved an available workstation only on those days they were at the New Carrollton, MD facility.

### Key Pilot Findings

The pilot, consisting of 20 OIRM managers and employees, was successful in demonstrating that flexible work options can be a win-win situation for the IS organization and employees. Below are the findings based on data collected from participants, managers and coworkers:

#### 1. Recruitment/Retention

**Strategy.** The pilot data revealed that more than half the participants were less likely to look for another job due to the ability to telecommute on a regular basis. For each employee retained, the organization saves the expense of replacing that employee. The nature of the pilot prevented research into the impact of flexiplace as a recruitment factor in attracting

new IS employees. Other studies, however, have shown that a substantial number of job candidates would choose the employer offering flexiplace over those who do not, with other factors being equal. Flexiplace can serve as a method for the Federal government to level the playing field with private industry due to salary constraints.

**2. Space Utilization.** The pilot found that expansion of the Flexiplace/Hoteling Program to other parts of IS would allow the organization to reallocate a minimum of 23 percent of the workstations for other purposes, such as accommodating additional employees or contractors. The ability to house the same number of individuals in a smaller amount of space results in significant real estate savings and can avoid the need to lease costly space in other buildings. The potential annual cost avoidance, based on a participation rate of 100 flexiplace/hoteling participants, is estimated to be \$414,000 (the larger the number of participants, the greater the savings).

**3. Employee Satisfaction.** Pilot participants reported a substantial increase in satisfaction levels and quality of work life as a result of flexiplace:

- 93 percent achieved greater balance between their professional and personal lives
- 88 percent experienced a lower level of stress
- 82 percent reported their morale improved
- 59 percent were more motivated while telecommuting.

Equally important, 100 percent of the managers of the participants were satisfied or very satisfied with flexiplace as an alternative work arrangement and understood the value of flexiplace as a business tool to attract and retain skilled employees.

4. **Customer Satisfaction.** The level of customer satisfaction experienced by an organization is directly related to several factors, including how well the quality of a product or service meets customer needs. All participants and managers reported that the quality of work delivered to customers either improved or remained neutral. Participants perceived their customers and coworkers to be supportive of flexiplace and indicated they provide better customer service while participating in the flexiplace program. The satisfaction an employee experiences relative to his/her job environment directly impacts customer satisfaction as well. Industry experience shows that satisfied employees generally results in satisfied customers.
5. **Business Results.** The type of work performed by participants was mostly program management in nature and did not lend itself to typical quantitative performance measures. As many as 82 percent of the participants reported an increase in their productivity while telecommuting. They indicated they completed more work, on time and with no decrease in quality. The participants' managers agreed or reported no change. Most participants experienced fewer distractions and interruptions, were more

focused, and were better able to plan, organize, and accomplish their workload at home compared with the main office. All of these factors contribute to the ability to produce higher quality and more timely work products.

### Lessons Learned

**Management Issues.** Managers reported that no significant adjustment was necessary to manage workers remotely. Participants highly valued the opportunity to telecommute and most reported that their performance was greatly enhanced by the ability to work at home compared with the office. Further, communications with their managers substantially improved for a large number of telecommuters. Data also did not reveal any negative impact on team dynamics, measured by the ability to conduct face-to-face meetings, absence of co-worker issues, impact on professional interaction with colleagues and the participants' sense of belonging to the organization.

For flexible work arrangements to be successful, management based on results is crucial. This management approach needs to be adopted for all employees regardless of whether workers are remote or on-site. An effective communications discipline helps to establish productive relationships and build trust between managers and telecommuters. It is also important for managers to understand that they cannot demand greater accountability from telecommuters than they do from on-site employees.

#### **IT/Technical Support.**

Connectivity, both at home and in a

## Telework in the Federal Government: Three Case Histories

hoteling operation, is essential to satisfying the remote worker's ongoing needs in the technology arena. Pilot participants initially experienced difficulties accessing the IRS network both from home and from the hoteling workstation. Some issues were part of the normal learning curve for both the organization and employees in transitioning to a mobile work environment. Others were systemic issues that must be resolved to adequately accommodate remote workers. For remote work to succeed on a larger scale, IS must ensure the following exists: a sufficient inventory of laptops; expertise to solve laptop/equipment problems; a clearly defined process for expeditious support of remote workers and user-friendly remote access to all IRS systems, not only e-mail.

The pilot demonstrated that having the right technology to perform one's job is the key difference in a flexiplace program that works and one that does not. It is important to design cost-effective solutions that meet the needs of the organization and the end-users. Technology representatives must understand what is currently used, evaluate the requirements of telecommuters, and properly match those requirements with available options.

**Hoteling.** Hoteling arrangements offer a valuable opportunity to significantly reduce real estate costs by optimizing the use of corporate space. Pilot data confirmed that the following key features are needed to realize the maximum benefits of hoteling and enhance satisfaction of participants and managers with the

arrangements: an easy-to-use and accessible space reservation system; a method to track people, their location and contact information; an automated means of switching phone extensions; an effective means to measure use of office space; and the ability for participants to easily manage access to files and storage, e.g., mobile file units, centralized cabinets, or document management software.

Since the sharing of office space can represent a significant change in work patterns for employees, the pilot demonstrated that hoteling policies and practices must consider the needs and expectations of users to the maximum extent possible. It is also important that the criteria for participation in the hoteling program be well-defined and administered in an equitable manner.

### Cost Benefit Analysis

The cost/benefit analysis identified the quantifiable costs and benefits associated with the pilot, both recurring and non-recurring. The analysis then extended the overall costs and benefits into a three-year implementation plan for the Flexiplace/Hoteling Program. The implementation plan assumes the acquisition of laptops as part of the three-year computer replacement cycle and participation of 100 employees in flexiplace/hoteling arrangements.

Based on these assumptions, the following table illustrates the total projected hard costs and benefits over a three-year period, resulting in potential net savings of \$805,838 for the organization:

**Table 1: Total Projected Cost-Benefit Analysis of Flexiplace/Hoteling Program**

<b>COSTS</b>	<b>BENEFITS*</b>	<b>SAVINGS</b>
Telecommunications \$675,722	Real Estate Avoidance \$1,242,000	
Equipment** 207,900	Recruitment Avoidance 496,000	
Space Management 49,400		
<b>Total: \$933,022</b>	<b>Total: \$1,738,860</b>	<b>\$805,838 over 3 yrs</b>

\* Not included are the intangible benefits of employee satisfaction and productivity enhancements.

\*\* This figure represents the difference between a desktop and laptop computer system.

## Recommendations

Based on the pilot's key findings and lessons learned, flexiplace and hoteling arrangements offer tremendous potential to IS as an effective recruitment and retention strategy for skilled professionals, a viable means to increase employee satisfaction, and a business strategy to maximize space utilization. The following major recommendations are presented in order to implement flexible work arrangements on a larger scale throughout the IS organization:

- Conduct a Systems Development prototype for remote access to IRS network
- Convene a technology group to identify solutions to meet needs of remote workers

- Commit to full funding of costs associated with the flexiplace program
- Increase number of IS participants in flexiplace program
- Develop IS rollout plan for a flexiplace/hoteling program with union buy-in.

In conclusion, advances in information technology and telecommunications now enable work to be performed regardless of location. The concept of a single place to work is, for the majority of office workers in the Information Age, outdated. It is costly and no longer matches the needs and desires of today's workforce. When a telework program is well planned, managed and supported, it is a powerful win-win solution for employers and employees, as well as the community at large.

# Telecommuting At The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

By Debbie Cohn

*For more than 10 years, **Debbie Cohn** has promoted telecommuting as a way to save space and retain good employees at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).*

**T**he U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has expanded its telecommuting program for attorneys to include 90 of its approximately 400 current trademark attorneys. A family-friendly workplace, the USPTO hopes to greatly expand the use of alternative work site options for an increasing percentage of its employees. The agency, in partnership with National Treasury Employees Union, began a work at home pilot program for a small group of 18 trademark attorneys since 1997. Reported results show that productivity and morale are favorably impacted by the work at home arrangement.

As suburban sprawl and crowded highways become an everyday reality in the Washington metropolitan area, employers and employees are looking to telecommuting as a way of doing business for the future. Some of the primary goals of the USPTO program are to reduce time spent on the roads and to make additional space available in an agency which has seen its workload increase greatly over past years. In addition, providing a better quality of work life for employees will enable the organization to attract and retain highly qualified employees.

The USPTO's comprehensive

guidelines have been used as a model for other federal agencies and private companies. The expanded program includes training for supervisors and participants and specific guidance on administrative, customer service and performance issues.

To determine the success of the two-year pilot program, the agency looked at the following areas: technology, employee performance and customer service, labor management relations and employee satisfaction.

**Technology:** Implementing a work-at-home program in the USPTO has presented some unique challenges, primarily in the area of technology. Trademark-examining attorneys work in a production environment using one-of-a-kind automated search and research tools contained in a number of live databases. The program involves the set up of a complete desktop work environment at participants' homes, enabling them to perform all of their job functions from a remote location. The pilot experience highlighted some areas where technology improvement was necessary, including the need to move away from costly ISDN connections. The new system architecture is based on internet connections and has resulted in some difficulties with line speed. The agency is currently

investigating transition to DSL as a possible solution for most of its telecommuters.

Performance and customer service: Compared with a control group of trademark examining attorneys in the office, pilot work at home employees were able to maintain or exceed performance goals. Productivity was positively affected. In addition, an independent customer telephone survey showed that work at home employees were able to provide the same high level of customer service as employees who remain in the office.

**Labor relations:** All aspects of the program were developed and implemented in partnership with National Treasury Employees Union Chapter 245 and through the PTO Partnership Council. A labor/management partnership working group continues to provide oversight over the expanded program. The working group has been one of the most successful partnership efforts in United States Patent and Trademark Office history and serves as a model for future endeavors in partnership between USPTO management and union representatives.

**Employee satisfaction:** For the employee, there are many benefits to telecommuting. Most telecommuters report they get more done and are more satisfied with their jobs as a result of telecommuting. The shortened commute decreases employee travel expenses and commuting stress, while enhancing the quality of work life and increasing the amount of time telecommuters have for family life and personal pursuits. Telecommuters also enjoy a

greater degree of work-related autonomy and responsibility. Pilot participants made the following comments during evaluation sessions:

*"The Flexiplace work-at-home program has saved me from two hours commuting time each day I worked at home. Instead of commuting to work I could put breakfast on the table, walk my 10-year-old to elementary school, drive the morning carpool for my 13-year-old's middle school and still start work earlier than I could when commuting to work."*

*"The single most significant benefit to me has been a wholesale improvement in morale. There is absolutely no comparison between the way I feel on my work-at-home days vs. in-office days. The work environment here at my rural Maryland home, with the view of mountains, trees and wildlife, possesses a general peace/quiet, which is a far cry from the urban office environment and, in my opinion, a vast improvement. Participation in this program has probably extended my PTO career. Prior to the announcement of the...pilot, [I] seriously considered leaving the PTO or requesting part-time status. Since starting [the pilot], these options seem less appealing."*

For the organization, telecommuting has proven to be an effective tool for improving job performance, helping recruit and retain valuable employees, and effectively utilizing new technology to conserve limited physical resources such as office space. The agency has also been able to accommodate disabled employees or employees with emergency circumstances, while they continue productive work.

# The Office of Real Property Telework Pilot

by William H. Michael, Jr.

**William H. (“Billy”) Michael, Jr.**, is a Senior Program Analyst with the U.S. General Services Administration’s Telework Team in the Office of Governmentwide Policy. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the International Telework Association & Council.

The Office of Real Property (MP) is a 40-person office of real estate professionals within the U.S. General Services Administration’s (GSA) Office of Governmentwide Policy. In addition to being the home office for GSA’s Governmentwide telework program, the office has provided extensive telework opportunities for its own staff. In early 2000, the office conducted a survey to measure the success of its telework pilot, which had been underway for about a year. At the time of the survey, more than

40 percent of the office teleworked regularly and another 8 percent teleworked intermittently (i.e., as needed).

Of the total number of respondents to the survey (26, or 68 percent), nearly 58 percent were teleworkers - all of whom worked at home, the majority (75 percent) according to a fixed schedule. The remaining group did not telework for a number of reasons:

- 25 percent are not interested.
- 25 percent are not comfortable with it.
- 25 percent have issues with their manager or team leader.
- 25 percent have other reasons (e.g., teleworking is not a high priority and assignments are not suitable for teleworking).

The survey respondents listed both positive and negative experiences with telework.

In addition, the survey touched upon another advantage of the existing telework pilot. In May 1999, a fire on the sixth floor of the GSA Central Office building caused a temporary disruption and relocation of Office of Real Property staff. The existing telework pilot yielded unexpected benefits by helping maintain

**Table 2:  
Survey Results on Telework Experiences**

### Positive

Ability to work w/fewer interruptions  
Increased concentration and productivity  
No commuting hassles  
Ability to schedule appointments and telework for the rest of the day  
Ability to work longer hours as needed  
Improved morale

### Negative

Difficulty with remote access  
Problems with call forwarding  
Difficulty with teleconferencing reception  
Problems with technical support  
Difficulty w/long distance dialing (one person without a phone card)  
Inability to switch telework day

continuity of operations for the office until alternate accommodations could be provided. Of the survey respondents, 54 percent (100 percent of all supervisors) said their view of telework was affected by this experience.

Lessons learned about telework during this period included:

- People become more creative (reported by two managers).
- It is important to know teleworkers' schedules.
- Teleworkers need to plan ahead and make sure that they have all the materials (like files downloaded to a disk) they will need for teleworking.
- Teleworkers should have second phone lines or cell phones for better accessibility.
- More protocols and better technology/connectivity are needed.
- Teleworking and desk sharing work if managers and coworkers are supportive.

In return for teleworking three days per week, several respondents (8) indicated a willingness to share office workspace (or participate in a hoteling pilot) in order to telework three or more days/week:

### Recommendations

The survey respondents - including managers and non-managers and both teleworkers and non-teleworkers - reported many positives about their telework experiences. However, there appeared to be a misunderstanding concerning the nature of telework. Many of the survey respondents, and especially those who are managers,

appeared to view telework as a "schedule" rather than as a way of performing work in the most effective manner. Work should be planned and scheduled (not telework times per se) according to the most effective means for performing it. This means that both teleworkers and telework managers must be flexible in agreeing upon when and where work will be done.

If a manager feels that an employee is inaccessible, avoiding on-site duties, not working to full capacity, planning poorly, or creating work for others, the manager should frankly communicate his or her concerns and reservations to the employee. The manager should attempt to resolve any issues with other staff, technology, equipment, or protocols, which may be causing the problems, and then give the employee an opportunity to improve. But, if there is no improvement, it would be appropriate for the manager to discontinue the teleworking arrangement.

Based on the results of the survey, the following recommendations were made:

**Recommendation #1:** The limit of one telework day per week imposed on most MP employees should be lifted. It should be clearly communicated to all staff that there are no arbitrary limitations on telework frequency. Staff should be encouraged to work remotely as long as their work meets the same quality, timeliness, and quantity expectations as at the traditional office. There should not be situations where staff are denied telework opportunities solely because they did not telework on a regularly scheduled telework day

## Telework in the Federal Government: Three Case Histories

as implied by one respondent's comment show above.

Several respondents indicated a need for telework protocols. Several protocols were suggested to those who attended the telework training before the pilot began. Specifically, teleworkers were cautioned to plan for their work ahead of time (making sure that they have all of the necessary materials that they will need); to plan for contingencies (for example copying necessary files to disks); and to inform all of their contacts (including their supervisor, coworkers, and customers) as to how they can be reached when teleworking. After the pilot had begun, another session was conducted on telework tips during which these ideas were reinforced. A few of the comments made by respondents may be attributed to a continuing skepticism that people who aren't physically in the office are really working, but there is enough concern to warrant a more formalized approach.

**Recommendation #2:** A small working group of teleworkers, non-teleworkers, and teleworker manager(s) should be convened to develop standardized protocols.

Several survey respondents, including both teleworkers and non-teleworkers, expressed needs for fax machines, extra telephone lines, call forwarding, ISDN/DSL/Cable lines, printers, and cell phones. Two non-teleworkers also asked for laptop computers and a few teleworkers commented that they would like to have laptops with faster speed. A few respondents also expressed a desire for computer docking stations.

Most of the non-teleworkers that asked for these remote access tools

indicated that they are not interested in teleworking. This implies an increasing need/desire for people to be remotely connected to their offices whether they are officially "teleworking" or not.

**Recommendation #3:** MP program support staff should explore the possibility of acquiring excess fax machines and copiers for those who need them. (This would not imply an attendant need for an extra telephone line, as dedicated access to fax machines is rarely necessary.) MP should also plan for replacing some of its current laptop computers with faster speed equipment. The newer, faster speed equipment should then first be given to those who telework most frequently. The older, somewhat slower equipment could then be provided to new teleworkers or to those who just need/desire occasional remote access.

38 percent of survey respondents reported difficulty with remote access. Faster laptops and higher-speed ISDN/DSL/Cable lines may help, and improved technical support and additional software may address other problems.

**Recommendation #4:** MP management should lobby the IT support staff to acquire software that would provide additional means of access to electronic mail for teleworkers.

**Recommendation #5:** A group of MP teleworkers and at least one manager should be tasked with developing a uniform policy on providing additional phone lines, ISDN/DSL/Cable lines, call forwarding features, and cell phones for teleworkers. Policy

consideration should be given to the frequency of teleworking and the need for immediate access, as determined by the duties of the position.

The MP phone system is archaic and does not address the needs of teleworkers. The current call-forwarding feature is inadequate. If someone at the traditional worksite uses a remote worker's telephone line while it is forwarded elsewhere, callers will receive a busy signal as opposed to the option of leaving a voice mail message. This is not good client service.

There are phone systems that allow for multiple simultaneous functions on single phone lines without incurring multiple function or line charges. (There may, however, be cabling/technical problems with introducing such systems into the Central Office structure and/or IT systems.) Also, many survey respondents commented on the poor audio quality of teleconference calls. A new phone system may be found which would address this problem also.

**Recommendation #6:** The MP internal integrated workplace team should study and evaluate different telephone systems towards recommending a new system which would provide a more comprehensive approach for addressing the telecommunications needs of remote workers. Specifically, the group should contact GSA's Federal Technology Service (FTS) about systems that allow callers to reach teleworkers via fax or voice on a single number wherever they are working. The group should also explore options for improving the audio quality of teleconferences.

One survey respondent said he/she was having problems making long distance calls and didn't have a phone card.

**Recommendation #7:** All MP staff should be reminded to get phone cards and told that if they experience problems with getting cards that they should inform their supervisors.

Several survey respondents expressed an interest in desk sharing/hoteling and docking stations.

**Recommendation #8:** One dedicated work area should be reconfigured so as to pilot the use of desk sharing/hoteling and docking stations. All MP teleworkers who are interested in testing these arrangements should be encouraged to work in this area when on-site.

### Telework Pilot Update

As of July 2001, most of the recommendations have been implemented. Both the number of teleworkers and the number of telework days have increased. There have been dramatic improvements in remote access, quality and speed of hardware, available software and technical help. The Office of Governmentwide Policy has developed a comprehensive telework policy that covers equipment and support for its own telework pilot program, which now covers the Office of Real Property's teleworker needs. A new phone system has corrected most of the problems identified in the recommendations. In addition, the redesigned space for the Office of Real Property includes plans for a hoteling pilot.

# Team-Building in a Virtual Environment



# Team-Building in a Virtual Environment

## Viewpoint

by Deborah L. Duarte

**(Dr.) Deborah L. Duarte** assists teams and organizations in creating environments and competencies that promote superior performance. She works with a wide range of clients in both the private and public sectors, including agencies such as the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. She is a frequent writer and lecturer on virtual teams, and co-author of one of the books (*Mastering Virtual Teams*) cited in the article presented here.

The U.S. General Services Administration should be lauded for its attention to creating a high-performance environment for virtual teams. Many organizations will create virtual teams without a lot of thought to the type of environment, skills and tools that teams need to be successful. This is usually a prescription for disaster as team leaders and members, used to working in co-located environments, struggle with issues such as:

- how to build trust when you cannot see one another,
- how to manage performance and conduct career coaching when you have only met the people on your team once or twice, and
- how to interpret terse e-mails or other electronic messages without the benefit of face-to-face contact.

The truth is that, although technology can make our lives easier, if it is not used wisely it can also serve to magnify interpersonal issues, performance problems and the amount of time it actually takes to get the job done.

The article "Team-Building in a Virtual Environment" points out that answering the question, "What exactly is a team" is critical in virtual teaming. In my experience, this is

one of the most important questions teams can ask. Team-building activities, regular face-to-face sessions, team web sites, protocols requiring team members to interact and collaborate on video conferences or audio bridges on a regular basis and attend team meetings (even virtually) - all become extra and non-value added work when the actual task requires a working group and not a team. Not all work requires a team. In a virtual environment, where teamwork can actually slow the task, making sure you need a team is vital.

On the other hand, once a real team is formed, my experience has shown that there is not a simple formula for success. Although there are many tools, methods and techniques teams can use, experience shows that the most successful teams have one thing in common: they take time to know, trust and respect each other and are dedicated to the team's success. Creating this trust is not easy. Trust requires successful interactions, knowing one another as people and showing care and respect for the people in the team, not just the task. In a virtual environment, interpersonal interactions become more, not less important! Using technology does not mean that we forget people! If we do, a virtual team might experience, at a

minimum, performance problems and, more important, might actually make the work environment more sterile and impersonal. Having face-to-face meetings is important, talking about weekends is critical, and taking the time to call and just see how people are more important in a virtual team.

I am told by teenagers that they use

the phone much less than we did. Often they use e-mail and instant messaging on a more frequent basis! Maybe the day will come when we do not need to hear a human voice and its inflection to have a relationship. But today, making sure that virtual teams take into account a human face is something that team leaders and members cannot forget.

---

# Team-Building in a Virtual Environment

by Joanne Shore

*Joanne Shore is a Program Analyst in the Innovative Workplaces Division of GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy.*

**T**he U.S. General Services Administration, along with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, has played a key role in making "family-friendly" work options part of the Federal environment. With recent legislation focused on Federal teleworking, GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy (OGP) has embarked this year (2001) on an organizational telework effort. In implementing this effort, however, the issue was raised: How can our organization maintain its "team-based" workstyle in a virtual environment?

OGP's Office of Real Property developed an initiative in August 2000 to address this issue. Representatives from OGP were tasked with recommending a training program that would address the special requirements of team building in a virtual environment. As

a first step, several of the representatives reviewed the current research and literature on virtual teams, the highlights of which are presented here.

## Research Findings on Virtual Teams

Teams have become a way of life in both the public and private sectors. They are one of the few work arrangements that enable the knowledge and experience of many to be used to solve increasingly complex and difficult problems. One of the issues facing those who wish to implement a team-based work environment is the question, "What exactly is a "team"?" For our purposes here, a team is defined as "a small number of people with complementary skills committed to a common purpose (interdependent), specific performance goals, and a

common working approach, with mutual accountability.”

The nature of teams has changed significantly over the past several years, reflecting similar changes in the work environment. Technology has played a key role in driving these changes - consider the Federal government’s current emphasis on knowledge management and collaborative work, the use of alternative workplace strategies such as telecommuting, and the rise of E-government. The traditional team was usually managed by a single Team Leader and consisted of a fixed membership drawn from one organization, co-located geographically and organizationally. With today’s distributed work environment, as well as the need to attract and retain a “worldclass” workforce, teams have adapted by becoming more flexible, both in membership and location - giving rise to the “virtual” or “remote” team.

A virtual team is defined as “a team that works across space, time, and boundaries with links strengthened by webs of communication technology.” Virtual teams often are formed as a reaction to a business requirement or as a result of programs, such as telecommuting, which introduce new ways of working. While organizations have had remote sites for many years, the difference now is that people at different locations are increasingly being asked to work interdependently and to share accountability for a single product, project, or outcome.

According to Duarte and Snyder, there are seven critical success factors for virtual teams:

- Human resource policies: Reward systems that recognize

contributions of virtual teams, measurement by results, support of alternative work arrangements such as telecommuting

- Training and on-the-job education and development:
- Standard organizational and team processes
- Use of electronic communication and collaboration technology:
- Organizational culture
- Top leadership support of virtual teams
- Team-leader and team-member competencies.<sup>7</sup>

Virtual teams need the same things all teams need: a clear mission, an explicit statement of roles and responsibilities, communication options which serve the team’s different needs, and opportunities to learn and change direction. But virtual teams have unique problems that are not easy to solve, due to the complexity of communicating over time, distance, and organizations. While the “tools” (technology) of virtual teams usually get most of the attention, the “people” issues (leadership, group dynamics) cannot be overlooked. After all, the use of advanced “tools” such as groupware is no guarantee of success.

Few people have really grappled with the human resources aspects of trying to lead and manage teams that are connected by distance in space and time. More often than not, organizations and team leaders pay little systematic attention to developing the competencies that team leaders - as well as team members - need in a virtual environment. For example, when virtual team leaders are asked about

<sup>7</sup> D.L. Duarte and N.T.Snyder (1999). *Mastering Virtual Teams*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 12-15.

the biggest challenge in leading a virtual team, they usually mention the increased sense of burden and responsibility it places on them. The team leader usually feels as if he or she is the “glue” that holds the team together. Virtual team members, when asked about the “downside” of working in virtual teams, almost always say that they are afraid that their careers will suffer.<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned previously, the findings presented here are indicative of the overall research effort. Through this effort, the OGP representatives gained a baseline of knowledge concerning the nature of virtual teams and were better prepared to take the next step - participation in a team-building course.

### Resources on Virtual Teams

For those of you interested in learning more about virtual teams, the following resources (which were used in researching this article) may be helpful.

#### Books

Duarte, D. L. and Snyder, N.T. (1999). *Mastering Virtual Teams*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Froggatt, Cynthia C.: (2001) *Work Naked: Eight Essential Principles for Peak Performance in the Virtual Workplace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Grenier, R. and Metes, G. (1995). *Going Virtual*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Hoefling, Trina (2001). *Working Virtually: Managing People for Successful Virtual Teams and Organizations*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Katzenbach, J.R. and Smith, D.K. (1993). *The Wisdom of Teams*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Lipnack, J. & Stamps, J. (1997). *Virtual Teams*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

### Online Resources

Center for the Study of Work Teams (<http://www.workteams.unt.edu/>): The Center, part of the University of North Texas, has a website focused on teams, including virtual teams.

Working by Wire (<http://www.knowab.co.uk/wbwpapers.html>): British consulting firm that maintains a website with information and studies on virtual teams.

### Training Virtual Teams: Observations and Recommendations

To assess what training was currently available on virtual teams, the OGP representatives attended a team-building and leadership course held in May 2001 at the Eastern Management Development Center (EMDC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Each representative participated to the fullest extent in the weeklong course, which emphasized “experiential learning” opportunities. These opportunities included various team-building exercises that graphically illustrated the “six secrets to effective teams,” as described in the course:

- Competent leadership
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Collaboration
- Creativity, and
- Camaraderie.

<sup>8</sup> Duarte and Snyder, p. 81

In addition, the OGP representatives found that many of the participants (almost all of whom were from other Federal agencies) were eager to hear more about teleworking and the OGP pilot.

Following the EMDC course, the OGP group met to discuss what they had learned about team building and what elements needed to be emphasized in a virtual environment. For the most part, the group found the course content extremely useful. Some of the exercises and material proved helpful for improving self-knowledge as well as for understanding what makes teams effective. The EMDC course emphasized that certain “secrets” are characteristic of all successful teams - virtual or not.

However, the OGP group concluded that the course did not address some of the requirements of virtual teams. Suggestions concerning course improvement included fewer (and less physical) team exercises and the addition of a virtual team-building “simulation” exercise. More time

was needed in covering key topics such as communications and collaboration, especially given the increased complexity resulting from a virtual environment.

The research findings had already shown that leading (and participating in) a virtual team requires the development of additional competencies (e.g., using electronic communication and collaboration technologies effectively) that go beyond the traditional ones found in a team-building course. These competencies should be addressed in a training course that deals with special requirements for all team roles. In addition, any training on virtual teams should include a discussion of the critical success factors, as mentioned in Duarte and Snyder. Finally, the personal experiences of the OGP representatives in dealing with a virtual work environment (e.g., through telecommuting and travel) underscore the need to provide information on the tools and techniques used to enhance team performance and productivity.

**“Ready, Set,  
Go Home”**



# “Ready, Set, Go Home”

## Viewpoint

by Madeline Caliendo

**Madeline Caliendo** is the Associate Administrator for the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. General Services Administration. Prior to coming to GSA, Madeline was an attorney at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) where she developed an expertise in Federal Sector EEO law and practice.

In the article, “Ready, Set, Go Home,” Carole Hawkins notes that Federal and state governments have been the front runners of the telecommuting movement. I am not surprised. The Federal government, and many state and local governments, have been at the forefront of many forward-thinking movements. This is true in the civil rights arena, as well.

The Federal government strives to be the model employer when it comes to equal employment opportunity. To this end, it has implemented many policies and practices to level the proverbial playing field. For example, Executive Order 13164 requires each Federal agency to develop procedures for disabled employees and applicants to request reasonable accommodation. Why? So that each Federal agency can meaningfully and efficiently respond to requests for reasonable accommodation. This will help breakdown the barriers faced by people with disabilities in the Federal workplace. Interestingly, telework is a form of reasonable accommodation that many employers provide to qualified associates with physical and mental disabilities.

There is no right to telecommute. However, the spirit behind telework is akin to the spirit behind the various anti-discrimination laws. That is, there is the potential to open the doors of equal employment

opportunity. What do I mean? As I see it, telework opens the door of opportunity for employers to hire the best and brightest for a particular position, even if that individual is not geographically near the workplace. It also enables employers to retain valued staff who because of either circumstance or desire work from home. Telework also provides a means for an employer to diversify its workforce. If an employer is in a locale that has limited demographic diversity, perhaps the diversity sought can be found and maintained through a long-distance telework arrangement.

Not all jobs are appropriate for telework, and not all people are good candidates for teleworkers. However, I expect many more are than we currently think. The benefits of telework—a potentially better qualified and diverse workforce, employees who are more satisfied and engaged in their work (i.e.: American Express), reduced traffic and congestion in the local community, employer’s saved operating costs, and a cleaner and safer environment are all compelling. Therefore, I think it is only a matter of time before more employers and employees jump on the telework bandwagon. I tip my hat to telework champions such as Wendell Joice at GSA, and Roger Madison, Jr. at IBM. Their example sets the stage for our teleworking future.

---

## “Ready, Set, Go Home”<sup>9</sup>

by Carole Hawkins

*If your employer told you to go home, you might think you were being fired. But if you're longing to join today's army of home-based workers, this couldn't be better news.*

**W**ith the proliferation of electronic and mobile communications devices, portable PCs, high-speed Internet access, and ASPs, more companies are realizing the benefits of telecommuting (also called teleworking). Federal and state governments were forerunners in the research and promotion of telecommuting programs. Their motives included minimizing traffic congestion, cutting operating costs, and protecting the environment. Other leaders were the technology companies that produce the products that enable you to take your office anywhere. Companies like IBM, Cisco Systems, and Symantec employ thousands who work full- or part-time from home-based offices. American Express backed into its telecommuting program. When its customer service employees' productivity declined, the company researched the problem, then set up remote offices. Productivity soared, and Amex soon realized it had launched a teleworking program.

Not all jobs, of course, are conducive to teleworking. If your job requires you to interact with colleagues and customers on a personal basis—or if you must access expensive equipment or sensitive information—working at home might not be an option. Evaluate your job first and figure out how you can be just as

effective at home; you'll have to present a strong case to your employer. If the telecommuting concept is new to your employer, you may find that you have an uphill, though not impossible, battle. The next thing to do is consider how you can increase customer satisfaction, thereby improving your employer's reason for existing—the bottom line.

One situation, real or imagined, that employers fear is loss of control. Therefore, if you want to telecommute, you must prove you're reliable and can work well independently. Both you and your manager must work to achieve the right blend of trust for effective communication. You might want to consider a telecommuting arrangement where, say, you spend half the week at home and the other days in the office. You might also propose a trial or test period to see how the arrangement works. Set a time limit of, say, six months, and plan to sit down with your manager at the end of that time to evaluate the results. For tips on preparing a case, check out telecommuting consultant, editor, and author June Langhoff's website ([www.langhoff.com](http://www.langhoff.com)). Langhoff has written several books on telecommuting and provides tips for would-be teleworkers and their employers. Langhoff also works with companies to help them plan and implement telecommuting programs.

<sup>9</sup> Copyright August 2001; Reprinted with permission, BLACK ENTERPRISE Magazine, New York, NY

## Walk The Talk

Wendell Joice, Ph.D., a research psychologist at the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), works out of his Washington, D.C., home office and travels extensively to preach the benefits of telecommuting. A 15-year telecommuter, he is a consultant for business as well as Congress on the subject, and has been with the Office of Governmentwide Policy for the past six years of his career with the GSA.

Although he considers himself a “people person” who loves to interact with others on both a social and professional level, Joice says he’s not willing to trade the benefits of teleworking for a desk job. His wife, Sylvia, also works at home. She’s a consultant to government on public health.

As an advocate for telecommuting, Joice says management is reluctant to let go of old practices. “People have anxiety about change,” he says. “Many managers, as well as employees, are still rooted in a 20th century work mentality. And some employers believe if they can’t see their employees, they aren’t working.” He adds, “The 9-to-5 concept may not always be the most effective in terms of cost of operation and productivity.”

Charged with implementing the government’s teleworking policy, Joice recalls his initial experiences as a teleworker: “I remember having to clarify to friends and family that I was working and not available for daytime errands. I [also got] a lot of sarcastic remarks from co-workers and friends, too.” Not everyone, it appears, was happy about the GSA’s teleworking program: “Once I was on an elevator at the main office and a

manager recognized me and told me that he wished I would go away.”

Today, the GSA has between 12,000 and 14,000 employees; roughly 7% of them are teleworkers. Joice says a key reason for the government’s teleworking policy is recruitment and retention. The goal is to increase the government’s ability to compete with business for qualified workers.

Joice splits his time between program implementation, policy development, and research, and works with both government agencies and the private sector to develop telecommuting programs. Over the past 10 years, he’s learned several lessons from his experience and passes them on to would-be telecommuters. “ [Back then] technical support was not geared up for remote work; consequently, I was on my own and needed to learn to be resourceful and independent, an art I still promote to teleworkers. I taught myself to troubleshoot software and hardware problems, purchased my own help manuals, guides, and software, and learned to contact vendors’ help desks at odd hours to avoid long waits.”

The most valuable lesson Joice learned, however, was how to deal with managers. “I learned that I needed to handle my managers with care. Even though they agreed to my work arrangement, it was still new to them and there were sensitive and nervous times. As a teleworker, it helps to be proactive in dealing with some managers, to ease them into it and prevent misunderstandings.” When you aren’t in the office on a daily basis, the smallest incident can quickly escalate if it’s not addressed immediately.

To stay in touch, Joice prefers the

mobility of his laptop, a Dell Latitude CPx provided by the GSA. But when he's at home, he uses a PC monitor and keyboard plugged into his laptop. He obtained these through a government surplus program.

“There is much surplus equipment available either through government programs or from computer companies and other businesses that can be had for a fraction of retail,” says Joice. “This might prove helpful to small companies on a tight budget or home workers who must purchase their own equipment.

Gil Gordon, president of Gil Gordon Associates and vice president of the International Telework Association & Council (ITAC; see website at [www.telecommute.org](http://www.telecommute.org)), says about 50% of companies with telecommuters provide equipment and furniture. In a recent ITAC study, Gordon found that every company had a different policy. Some provided computers but not furniture; others provided an ergonomic chair; a few companies wanted the equipment back at termination of employment, some did not; several provided everything from state-of-the-art electronics with frequent upgrades, while some companies provided nothing. Make sure you and your employer agree on an equipment policy before you head out the door.

## Road Tripping

Since the IBM Corp. was a leader in the development of mobile technology, it was only natural that it would provide telecommuting opportunities to its own workforce. And Roger Madison Jr., senior locations executive for IBM in Columbus, Ohio, and an e-business solutions sales executive for the

public sector, was the perfect candidate. A 27-year employee, Madison began his career as a customer engineer at IBM and has held key positions worldwide since then, establishing the government business unit in Pretoria, South Africa, following the lifting of sanctions.

Madison is one of IBM's 60,000 employees worldwide who are telecommuters or mobile workers. He has worked from his Columbus, Ohio, home office since 1998, when he returned from South Africa. His teleworking arrangement initially required him to work three days a week in Ohio and two days in Washington, D.C. Although his home office is his headquarters, Madison spends much of his time on the road. “The arrangement gives me greater mobility, flexibility, and the ability to concentrate on my customers. Your performance isn't tied to another person's schedule or availability.”

Madison admits that initially separation from the office was awkward because he was so accustomed to face-to-face communication. “However,” he says, “the electronic tools IBM provided, such as processing routine reports, video conferencing, voice mail, and American Express' travel management service, solved the problems. It was just a matter of getting used to them. Now it's a breeze,” he adds.

Whether employers believe it or not, one trap that telecommuters fall into initially is overworking. A big challenge for Madison was overcoming that tendency; still, his office is wherever he happens to be—airplane, hotel room, or client's office.

To demonstrate the workability of telecommuting, Madison explains that initially his manager and administrative support were in Washington, D.C. Now his manager is in Atlanta and his administrative support is in Columbus, Ohio. “But with mobile technology, your office travels with you. I can go to any IBM location anywhere in the world and plug in to access files and programs and the company network. Your virtual office is wherever you are.”

Madison works with key business accounts and firmly believes that mobility makes him more accessible to his customers. “My customers don’t know or care where I am as long as they have ready access and support. By cutting down on commuting time, I have more time to devote to my clients.” As for problems caused by not being in the office, he says they are “negligible. No more than for other companies with satellite offices,” he adds.

Continuing the tradition, Madison’s son, Roger Madison III, is part of IBM’s army of mobile IT specialists in the global services division in Columbus, Ohio.

## Use The Right Tools

An old adage goes, “It’s a poor workman who blames his tools.” To make sure you don’t find yourself in this situation, it is important to select the right equipment for your job. Most large companies have an IT staff that decides which equipment you’ll get. But if you must supply your own, it’s best to shop around. Two good places to start your research are CNet ([www.cnet.com](http://www.cnet.com)) and ZDNet (<http://www.zdnet.com/>).

If you’re in the market for a notebook

computer you will find a mind-boggling array of products. On the bargain end, look for the Hewlett-Packard Pavilion n5150, the Apple iBook, the Toshiba Satellite 1715XCDS, the Compaq Presario 1400, or the Gateway Solo 1150s (with three models to choose from). These machines all cost between \$1,000 and \$1,700 with the basic configuration. (Generally, they run on a Pentium III or Celeron CPU chip with 64MB of RAM, a 6-10GB hard drive, Windows 98, and Microsoft Office or Works suite).

If your wallet is a little fatter, consider the WinBook ZI, the Gateway Solo 9500cx, the Toshiba Satellite 2805-S402, the Micron TransPort GX+, or the Apple PowerBook G4/500 Titanium, all priced from \$2,200 to \$3,500.

A remote control access program is also key to taking your office with you, whether you are linking with company headquarters from home or on the road. Two popular programs are LapLink 2000 Win9X/NT4 and Symantec’s pcAnywhere ([www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com)). Zone Labs’ ZoneAlarm 2.1 is also a good bet, and claims to make your computer invisible to hackers. It costs \$40 but is free to home-based users.

Without a remote control access program, you would need miles of cable to connect you to company headquarters. At many companies virtually everything is done via computer. Employees can access expense reports, travel authorizations, company bulletins and announcements, newsletters, supply requisitions, software programs and upgrades through their intranets. Without such access, the home worker could not even turn in a time sheet.

## Why Telecommute?

Results of a study conducted by Texas A&M University released in early May 2001 concluded that Americans in major cities spend on average more than 50 hours a year sitting in traffic. Taking into account the millions of hours commuters spend on the highway, the number of wasted hours is immeasurable. Other factors in favor of telecommuting are reduced air pollution, road rage, stress-related illnesses, soaring gasoline prices, increases in auto insurance premiums, traffic related deaths, and the depletion of natural resources in the manufacture of automobiles and tires. An hour or two spent commuting is time that could be devoted to home and family life. “It’s a very practical and simple thing,” says Joice. “Government must play a proactive role to make it more commonplace, whether through incentives or by mandate.”

## Countdown to Telecommuting

Before you even ask about teleworking, you’ll need to devise a strategy—one that will guarantee a “yes” from your manager. The key is to plan early. Here’s how to prepare:

### 6 months

- Learn all you can about your job. Once at home, you may not always have instant access to help or supervision when a problem arises.
- Take advantage of company-sponsored classes in computers or other work-related courses. If none are available, visit the library or check out online courses.

- Show your employer you can work without supervision. Strive to overcome any bad habits you may have formed, such as spending too much time away from your desk, visiting with co-workers, or making personal phone calls.
- Develop good working relationships with other colleagues. You may need their help when you’re working from home.

### 5 months

- Present your case to your employer. Put it in writing.
- Divide it into two sections: (1) how it can benefit the employer, and (2) why you are a good candidate for teleworking.

### 4 months

- Find out what equipment will be provided—and what you’ll have to purchase. If you must purchase some or all of your equipment, you may need to work out a budget. Ask your employer to help with financial arrangements.
- Ask that the teleworking agreement be put in writing. You could get a new supervisor who might wish to rein you back into the office.
- Learn about your employer’s insurance coverage. Most companies’ insurance policies extend to remote workers. But this should be made clear at the start. Your homeowner’s insurance policy may provide some additional relief in the event of, say, a fire that destroys equipment and files. If you are a renter, look into a renter’s insurance policy. You might wish to cover only the work-related items.

### **3 months**

- Decide on the physical setup of your home office. If you have an extra room that can be used as an office, this is ideal. If not, plan for an area that will give you adequate space for equipment, cable, and phone line access, file cabinets, and privacy.
- Find out what equipment you will be setting up in your home. Learn how to operate it correctly and make minor repairs (in case there is no tech support plan in place). Be sure to have a thorough knowledge of the software you'll be using.

### **2 months**

- Check with outside agencies that might affect your move home, such as the phone company, cable supplier, and the Postal Service.
- Establish a connection with office suppliers and equipment maintenance professionals, if your employer doesn't pay for supplies.
- Make friends with your company's IT department.
- Sit down with your supervisor and go over your duties and schedule. Home workers are often rated according to productivity, so you need to know what is expected of you.

- Be flexible. You may be required to come into the office at intervals for meetings or training. Establish the hours you are required to be at your home office. (You must be available if customers or colleagues need to contact you during normal business hours.)

### **1 month**

- Start transferring files and data to your home office. Make a list of e-mail addresses and phone numbers you will need to access. Troubleshoot to make sure that the equipment and software work.
- Get into the habit of regularly backing up your files. There's no excuse for losing data.
- Advise family and friends that your time and attention are still restricted to your job while you're working. If you have children, make arrangements with daycare providers.
- Establish a routine. If you have to take your children to school, for example, plan to be back at your desk for your agreed-upon work schedule.

### **Day 1**

- Turn off the alarm, make the coffee, and stroll down the hallway to your office.

## "Ready, Set, Go Home"

**Profile: Roger Madison Jr.,  
Senior Locations Executive**

**Company: IBM**

**Tools (IBM pays for all software and equipment and provides periodic upgrades):**

- IBM ThinkPad 600 with 128MB of RAM, 10GB hard drive.
- High-speed cable modem.
- Hewlett-Packard printer/scanner/copier.
- Software: Windows 2000 Professional; Microsoft Excel 2000; Lotus Notes 5.0.5; Lotus SmartSuite Millennium R9.6, with WordPro, Freelance, Approach 123, and Organizer; Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.05c and Adobe Accessibility Tools; Norton AntiVirus CE 7.5M; Microsoft Viewers: Word 97/2000, PowerPoint 97/2000, and Access Snapshot Viewer 9.0.



**Photo courtesy of  
Welton B. Doby III**

**Profile: Wendell Joice, Ph.D.,  
research psychologist**

**Company: General Services Administration**

**Tools (GSA pays for):**

- Dell Latitude CPx (650 MHz, 128 MB of RAM, 56K modem).
- Iomega 250 Zip drive.
- Microsoft Office, virus software, Lotus Notes.
- Dell 15-inch monitor and keyboard for use with laptop.
- Voice mail and call forwarding (routes calls from central office to home office).
- Long distance credit card with conference call features.

**Tools (Joice pays for):**

- Hewlett-Packard DeskJet printer.
- Second phone line (for data).
- Xerox WorkCentre fax machine.
- Logitech Page Scan Color Pro scanner.



# More Productivity-Related Initiatives



# More Productivity-Related Initiatives

**G**SA's Office of Real Property has formed strategic alliances and partnerships with several organizations to study and research workplace issues (including productivity-related topics) affecting the Federal real estate community. Later in 2001, we will release a report summarizing the lessons learned from these partnerships. If you would like to receive a copy of this report, see the contact information provided in Appendix A.

Among the numerous alliances that the office has joined are the Workplace Productivity Consortium, the Federal Facilities Council, the Advanced Building Systems Integration Consortium, the Workplace Network and the Gartner Group - MIT Workplace Consortium.

The Workplace Productivity Consortium (WPC) is a group of corporate real estate executives from various Fortune 500 companies in the financial, technology, retail, and research sectors. GSA and Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) are the only public sector members of the WPC.

The group pools the resources and knowledge of managers and researchers to investigate the role of the workplace in the productivity of organizations. Through quarterly meetings the WPC investigates the current state of research on the workplace and its impact on worker productivity. The group sponsors an annual benchmark survey of its members. In addition to the customary measures of real estate (inventory, workspace standards, and vacancy rate), the survey queries its members on the trends in alternative

work environments, workplace amenities, and emerging workplace technology. The WPC also developed a Productivity Diagnostic Tool to measure the impact on productivity and performance resulting from physical changes in the workplace. The group plans to test the model in several pilot projects over the next year.

The Federal Facilities Council (FFC), part of the National Research Council, is an organization comprised of Federal agencies that have an interest in Federal facility design, construction, operation, and management. The FFC promotes cooperation among the member Federal agencies and other organizations in the facility sector to advance the concepts of building science and technology. The Office of Real Property and the Public Buildings Service jointly serve GSA's interests in the FFC.

This year the FFC published a report entitled Sustainable Federal Facilities, A Guide to Integrating Value Engineering, Life-Cycle Costing, and Sustainable Development. The report demonstrates how Federal agencies can integrate the concepts of value engineering and life-cycle costing throughout the design and construction process. Incorporating these concepts will create sustainable development in Federal facilities and will meet the requirements of Executive Order 13123, which promotes and mandates efficient energy management. The FFC will study several other facility issues in the next year including post occupancy evaluations, performance based condition assessments, and creating business cases for public capital improvement.

## More Productivity-Related Initiatives

The Advanced Building Systems Integration Consortium (ABSIC) is an alliance between academia, the public sector, and the private sector that aims to improve the quality and performance of commercial buildings and its associated systems.

Some of the members include Carnegie Mellon University, Bank of America, Johnson Controls, Inc., Steelcase, Inc., Zumtobel Staff Lighting, Inc., the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Department of State, Environmental Protection Agency, GSA, PWGSC and the Dutch Government Buildings Agency.

ABSIC has five major projects underway:

- Guidelines for High-Performance Workplaces, showing how to create flexible, high-performance workplaces with an integrated system and user-based approach;
- The Building Investment Decision Support (BIDS) tool, a web-based cost-benefit analysis matrix to

calculate the cost benefits of various innovative building and workplace strategies;

- The SEMPER Project, a modeling tool to test building system impacts at the conceptual design stage;
- The Building as Power Plant, examining new technologies that will allow buildings to produce more energy than they use; and
- Intelligent Workplace Control Systems, developing ways to integrate the operation of all building systems to create more efficient, comfortable workspace.

The Workplace Network (TWN) is an association of senior real estate executives who exchange strategies, ideas, and practical information. TWN provides a forum for its members to establish strong professional relationships with colleagues from around the world, discuss issues of importance, share problems and solutions, develop strategies, and assess their organizations' performance. They

then translate what they learn into successful management practices, operations and results. Current members include GSA, PWGSC, the Office of Government Commerce in the United Kingdom, Statsbygg in Norway, the Dutch Government Buildings Agency and a dozen other national and provincial governments.

Through its involvement in the TWN, GSA participated in a joint study that was sponsored by Delft University of the Netherlands. The study, entitled International Comparative Analysis on How Federal Governments Manage Their Real Estate Portfolios, compares the historical approaches and philosophies of the organizations that manage the national real estate portfolios for the governments of the Netherlands, United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The report also analyzes the potential consequences of various real estate strategies based on the historical information collected.

The Gartner Group and the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology (MIT) have formed a Workplace Consortium to jointly sponsor a research effort for exploring the impact that the e-business economy is having on the real estate industry. The Consortium also plans to propose business models that seamlessly integrate real estate and the workplace into this new business environment. The Gartner Group/MIT partnership has over 20 members (including GSA) from academia, government, and industry at the national and international levels.

The consortium is exploring these five areas of the new workplace industry:

1. E-business implications for workplace making
2. Workplace space and cyberspace design
3. New service offerings and outsourcing
4. Organizational trends
5. Performance metrics

A report will be released late in 2001.

# Appendix A: Contact Information



*Photo courtesy Owens Corning*

# Appendix A: Contact Information

If you are interested in learning more about any of the subjects provided in this publication, please contact the following individuals:

## **Programs of the GSA Office of Real Property**

Stan Kaczmarczyk

E-mail: [stan.kaczmarczyk@gsa.gov](mailto:stan.kaczmarczyk@gsa.gov)

## **Content of this publication, or for additional copies**

Joanne B. Shore

E-mail: [joanne.shore@gsa.gov](mailto:joanne.shore@gsa.gov)

## **The Integrated Workplace**

Rob Obenreder

E-mail: [rob.obenreder@gsa.gov](mailto:rob.obenreder@gsa.gov)

## **“The 21st-Century Workplace”**

Christine Barber

E-mail: [Christine\\_F\\_Barber@knoll.com](mailto:Christine_F_Barber@knoll.com)

## **“Please Hold, I Think My House is on Fire”**

Gina Vega

E-mail: [gvega@merrimack.edu](mailto:gvega@merrimack.edu)

Gregory Simpson

E-mail: [gregsimpson@att.com](mailto:gregsimpson@att.com)

## **The Internal Revenue Service Hoteling Pilot**

Adriane Thormahlen

E-mail: [adriane.thormahlen@irs.gov](mailto:adriane.thormahlen@irs.gov)

## **Telecommuting at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office**

Debbie Cohn

E-mail: [Debbie.cohn@uspto.gov](mailto:Debbie.cohn@uspto.gov)

## **The Office of Real Property Telework Pilot**

Billy Michael

E-mail: [william.michael@gsa.gov](mailto:william.michael@gsa.gov)

## **General information on Federal government telework programs**

Dr. Wendell Joice

E-mail: [wendell.joice@gsa.gov](mailto:wendell.joice@gsa.gov)

## **“Team-Building in a Virtual Environment”**

Joanne B. Shore

E-mail: [joanne.shore@gsa.gov](mailto:joanne.shore@gsa.gov)

## **“Ready, Set, Go Home”**

Donna Dick

E-mail: [dickd@blackenterprise.com](mailto:dickd@blackenterprise.com)

## **Other productivity-related GSA initiatives (as described in the section on Other Research Perspectives)**

Chris Coneeney

E-mail: [chris.coneeney@gsa.gov](mailto:chris.coneeney@gsa.gov)

## **Copies of Productivity and the Workplace (featuring Productivity Payback Model)**

Ray Wynter

E-mail: [ray.wynter@gsa.gov](mailto:ray.wynter@gsa.gov)

# Publication Survey: People and the Workplace



# Publication Survey: People and the Workplace

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey so we may better meet our customer's needs.

1. The publication is of interest to you.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_

2. The publication format provides easy access to matters of interest to you.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_

3. The publication addresses issues that are of value to you in your position.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_

4. Access to detailed comments is necessary because the Executive Summary does not provide sufficient information.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_

5. The information provided in the publication is fair and impartial.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_

6. The publication is an appropriate length.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_

7. The publication is easy to understand.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_ Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please provide any additional comments on the publication: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please tear this survey page out and fax it to us at (202) 208-7240; or fold it in half, tape closed, and mail it back to us.  
Thank you for your participation.

U S GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTWIDE POLICY  
1800 F ST NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20405-0001

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

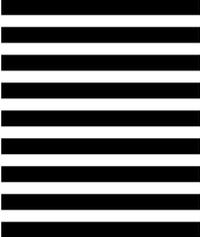
FIRST CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 12710 WASHINGTON DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY THE U S GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

U S GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF REAL PROPERTY (MPE)  
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTWIDE POLICY  
1800 F ST NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20405-0001



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES







*Smarter Solutions*

# People Places & Tools

December 2001

GSA Office of Governmentwide Policy  
Office of Real Property

U.S. General Services Administration  
1800 F Street NW  
Washington DC 20405  
[www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)